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THE LEWTHWAITE GIRLS.

A Church-Decoration Story.

'I don't believe in town Christmases,' said Miss Barbara Lewthwaite to her mother one day, early in December. 'Having known them all my life, I pronounce them to be vulgar—decidedly vulgar.'

'Barbara!' the mother replied, partly in exclamation, partly in interrogation.

'They are bad style,' Barbara went on. 'I have read more Christmas stories than I can possibly remember at this moment, but I cannot recall a single good one that had its scene laid in Bayswater. All the thrilling events came off in the country; and you should know if you read the newspapers, as you ought to do, mamma, that all aristocratic people go down to their baronial mansions at Christmas, and dispense hospitality to their dependents from ancestral halls.'

'But we have no country house,' said Mrs. Lewthwaite, with a shiver, 'and glad I am that I do not own one of those horrible places, where the damp from the trees gives one rheumatism, and all the sand-bags in the world would not exclude the draughts from the windows.'

'But cannot we go to some nice warm house where there are no

draughts? I should think that if the yule-logs were burned as they ought to be universally, as our forefathers had them, there would not be a word heard of the draughts.'

'There is no place like home,' sighed Mrs. Lewthwaite, who had great faith in the convincing efficacy of poetical quotations.

'Yes, for some people,' replied her daughter—'people of ignoble aims, as the Poet Laureate would say.'

'I do not know much about aims,' said Mrs. Lewthwaite, 'but I know Christmas is quite expensive enough without increasing the outlay by running off to Brighton, or some of those insolvency promoting places.'

'Brighton is not my ideal either,' Barbara answered. 'Christmas-day in an hotel is still worse style than having it here in Bayswater. I have been talking it over with Jemima, and we are agreed. We think cousin Henry's rectory would be the correct thing. They ought to be very glad to have us, for they do not scruple to come here uninvited when there are May meetings and rose-shows to be held. And you would save by it, mamma, for you would escape all the Christmas-boxes you are expected to give in town.'

'Not a penny,' Mrs. Lewthwaite said sturdily, 'not a sixpence. From the postman down to the newsboy they would all be down on us like harpies when we came back.'

'We do so long for a country Christmas, Jemima and I,' Miss Lewthwaite said, clasping her hands ecstatically—'a real old-fashioned country Christmas, like what one reads of—and we shall never be happy till we have had one. We long for an ivy-mantled tower; whether it has owls in it or not is quite immaterial so long as there is a peal of bells. "Ring out, wild bells, across the snow," we shall say in real earnest then. I like the thought of a grand wild stretch of country, with only an occasional poacher here and there to be seen.'

'Poachers!' cried Mrs. Lewthwaite.

'Well, men like poachers: it does not matter much either way, I suppose, but it is always a part of the stories. Then there would be the trees bending beneath the weight of the snowy crystals; the moon, temporarily obscured, bursting out from behind the clouds—'

'You can have trees and a moon in Kensington Gardens; and as to bells, they are wild enough in London in all conscience, for they don't let one have a wink of sleep on Christmas-eve.'

'And the stars,' pursued Barbara; "'I saw the great Orion sloping slowly towards the west;"' from which unseasonable quotation it will be perceived that Barbara had not profited at school by having the Use of the Globes paid for extra.

'I suppose,' Mrs. Lewthwaite put in sarcastically, 'the stars are pretty much the same set in the country that we have here at home!'

'But there is the church, the genuine old country church, that is

decorated by the parishioners, not by professionals as in town. I have the whole scene in my mind's eye, mamma; I know how it all takes place. There is a manor house, which is always full of guests at Christmas—nice superior people, and generally one or two young Guardsmen. They all come down and help to decorate the church, young ladies as well as gentlemen, and have ladders and curates to reach to the high-up places. They twine wreaths of ivy and holly round the pillars, and occasionally burst out singing a Christmas carol. Then there are always one or two engagements about New Year's-day, in consequence of having fallen in love with each other at the decorations, and having had a good deal of mistletoe hung up at home.'

Poor Mrs. Lewthwaite! When her other daughter appeared on the scene, and joined Barbara in her demand for a real genuine country Christmas, she ceased to argue, but merely prophesied her own illness and death as the next great family event.

'Barbara is right,' Miss Jemima said. 'Town Christmases are deplorably vulgar. There are always people starving in attics, and immense excitement when benefactors and benefactresses rush breathless up the stairs at critical moments with baskets of provisions, followed by men staggering under the weight of sacks of coals. Yes, that sort of thing used to be thought highly dramatic, but it is played out. I do not like starving people myself; and, of course, in the country the squire gives the cottagers dinners of roast beef and plum-pudding, which is so much better an arrangement for every one.'

Barbara and her sister carried their point, and the mother and daughters announced their inten-

tion of going down to cousin Henry's rectory at Netley-in-the-Wold, to enjoy the pleasure of a family reunion at the festive season.

It can scarcely be said that cousin Henry and his daughter Jane, who was mistress of the house, were overjoyed at the prospect afforded them. But if you do not hesitate to quarter yourself once or twice a year on your town relatives, you must not take it amiss if they return the compliment exactly when you least expect or desire to have them.

The two girls were in great spirits by the time they and their luggage reached the Great Northern Railway Terminus. Mrs. Lewthwaite was trying to be resigned, and now that they were all in motion began to repose upon the thought of two new and particularly stylish caps which her daughters had added to her wardrobe.

'For,' said Barbara, 'we are sure to have one or two parties at the manor house, and I should not like the squire's people to think we are dowdy folk like cousin Jane, with her dreadful old turned silk dresses and seedy feathers.'

It was at the ticket-window that Barbara's heart gave its first mighty throb.

Two most aristocratic young men, exactly like the fascinating gentlemen of the Christmas stories, were taking tickets also, and the words, 'Netley Junction,' sent the blood up into Barbara's temples. How she rushed back to Jemima she never knew.

'Two,' she gasped, 'one dark, one fair; luggage, gun-cases, first class to Netley Junction!'

'Where? where?' cried Jemima.

'There, there,' answered Barbara, pointing to the travellers, who were picking up newspapers at the book-stall.

'And we are going second

Jemima exclaimed; 'what a terrible blunder! Cannot we get mamma to change the tickets? O dear, what a pity!'

'They are gone into "smoking,"' Barbara reassured her a few minutes afterwards. 'We should only have wasted the extra money, and made mamma disagreeable. At the same time, Jemima, I think smoking-carriages ought not to be allowed, they make young men unsociable.'

Amid the difficulties of rescuing their luggage at the station for Netley, the Lewthwaite girls had still eyes and ears to watch for their heroes, and had the satisfaction of seeing them received by two young ladies, who came in a wagonette which the driver of the fly for the rectory told them was from the manor house.

Barbara was happy now. She could not help reminding her companions of her first proposals to spend Christmas in the country.

'Depend upon it we have done well,' she said. 'And there is the decoration of the church to be done; I have taken care that we are in time for that.'

Cousin Jane's reception was scarcely as warm as Christmas greetings are usually expected to be. She remarked that the train was late and dinner waiting, and hurried them up-stairs. There were fires in the bedrooms, it was true, but apparently they were only just lighted, and the smoke from fresh fir-branches that had been thrust in at the last moment made it impossible to close either doors or windows.

This was on Monday evening, and Christmas-day fell upon the Thursday following. Tuesday was cold, frosty, and foggy, and as cousin Jane was busy all day in domestic and parochial matters, the sisters were left to their own devices. They walked down to

the village, about three-quarters of a mile from the house, and took a look at the church. It was not exactly Barbara's ideal church, having been recently restored by a local architect, who had left his mark on the building by making it as unlike itself originally as possible. Still, as Barbara said, it would bear a good deal of decorating. She talked to the old sexton, and asked him how the details were carried out—who worked, when they commenced, when they left off, and if the villagers took much interest in the decorations.

The sexton did not for some time perceive the drift of the questioning; then he spoke out,

'There's me, and rector's darter, and squire's darter mebbe, and t'other one, and two Flibsby's.'

Barbara felt still in the dark; but Jemima said to-morrow would clear it all up.

Cousin Jane seemed surprised to find so much enthusiasm upon the subject of church decoration.

'I consider it is a great nuisance,' she said, 'when one has so many other things to attend to, being obliged to shiver all Christmas-eve in a cold damp church. We did very well here till Maude Cumberland came to live at the manor house. She is the old man's niece, and an heiress, so everything has to give way to her. Old Robinson used to stick a bit of holly at every candle-sconce, and it did very well; but these girls are never happy unless they are turning the whole parish upside down. Papa cannot keep a curate twelve months, for his head is sure to be turned with flattery, and he makes our lives burdensome by starting schemes and clubs invented by these girls, which they expect me to carry on when they leave home.'

It was all exactly as Barbara

wished. She begged cousin Jane would depute Jemima and her to take Jane's place at the church, which the rector's daughter was only too glad to do. She had borrowed one of Jemima's dinner-dresses, and was eager to copy it in order to wear a similar one at the manor house on St. Stephen's-day.

Breakfast was hastily swallowed on Christmas-eve, and in high spirits Barbara and her sister started for the church. There was no one there when they arrived; but the door was open, a pile of evergreens lay on the floor in the centre of the nave, and balls of twine on the front of one of the pews.

'Only think of people making their decorations in the church itself!' exclaimed Jemima. 'I never heard of such a thing in my life! Don't you think we ought to carry our work into the school-room?'

But old Robinson, on being hunted up, said that this was impossible. Madam was coming down from the manor house to give out blankets, and they could not go there, so the sisters returned to the church.

'Don't touch the chancel,' cousin Jane had said at parting, 'for the Cumberland girls make it a part of their religion to cram it up and trick it out themselves. We want new door-mats, the rope from the belfry is at its last gasp; but the manor house ladies never do what is useful.'

'And quite right,' Barbara said to her sister privately. 'The parish ought to buy its own ropes and mats; I quite hold with the Cumberlands. If I lived in the same parish with cousin Jane I should soon be driven into paganism, for she is one of the most unpleasant Christians I ever met.'

The girls began with the pulpit.

It was very cold work, and very dull, for no one came near them, not so much as a curate to give assistance.

At one o'clock luncheon was sent down from the rectory—a plate of sandwiches and a jug of milk. Cousin Jane sent a message with this feast to say she had sent them milk because it must be a treat to people coming from London, where all the dairies were so dishonestly managed, and the milk full of disease.

Barbara was very hungry, having breakfasted lightly, and she made an effort to partake of the luxuries. The milk was half frozen, and as the lumps of ice rattled against her chattering teeth, she felt as if she could never be warm again. For a cup of coffee she would have given the world at that moment.

'I'd rather,' she said to her sister, as well as she could speak, 'take my chance of typhoid in the Paddington milk than swallow icebergs in this dreadful place.'

It was not till three o'clock that any one joined them, and then came two elderly ladies followed by a maid and a man bearing baskets.

These were the Flibbys of whom mention has been made.

The new arrivals walked up the centre aisle, and paused in front of the pulpit.

'Don't you think it looks well?' Barbara said, with a glow of pride in her work.

'I beg your pardon,' one of the Flibbys said sternly. 'May I ask who you are and by what authority you are tampering with the parish church?'

'Cousin Jane was engaged at home,' said Barbara; 'we have taken her place.'

'What is she doing?' said the spinster lady sharply.

'She has a little cold,' said Je-

mima, who had been charged not to reveal the secret of the dress-making.

'She always has one when there is work to be done,' said Miss Flibby. 'What tempted you to touch the pulpit, young woman?'

'It is the central feature of the building,' promptly replied Barbara, 'and it must be worked from. The idea for the whole edifice comes from it.'

'Why have you not done the rest of your edifice?' asked the other sister Flibby sarcastically.

'All in good time,' said Barbara, with a patronising manner.

'I wonder when that will be?' Flibby No. I. retorted, walking up to the pulpit and beginning to strip it of its decorations.

Barbara uttered a cry of indignation, and sprang forward.

'Madam!' she protested.

'You need not "madam" me,' said Miss Flibby, 'for I happen to be at home in my own parish, which you are not. The assurance of young ladies of the present day is beyond belief. Did not Jane Lewthwaite tell you that we always do the pulpit? If it waited for her it would never be done; but it has always been a prerogative of our family to deal with pulpits. Our father was a great theologian—I daresay you have seen his volumes of sermons in the British Museum; and so long as we both live we decline to be interfered with in respect to this and other pulpits in the neighbourhood, for which we make ourselves responsible.'

Then, opening the baskets that the servants carried, Miss Phebe and her sister took out some festoons ready made, and began to hang them over the pulpit, now quite stripped of all the decorations arranged by Barbara and Jemima, who stood looking on aghast with dismay.

The Flibbys' work occupied less

than half an hour, and when it was done they retired from the scene, leaving the Lewthwaite sisters with both wiser and sadder views of church decoration.

'You had better light the church, and we will get on with our work, Robinson,' Barbara said wearily.

'Light the church!' cried Robinson, 'on a week-day!'

'Why not?' Jemima asked.

'You can have a candle if you like,' said the old man, 'but the lamps are cleaned and filled for Sunday.'

'Lamps filled?' cried Barbara. 'So these wretched barbarians have no gas! How very dreadful!'

The candle was brought, and shed a light exceedingly dim, but with nothing in the least religious in it.

'And how are you getting on, Jane? have you nearly finished?'

The voice out of the gloom came from Miss Maude Cumberland, who, with her cousin and the two young men who had last been seen in the wagonette, entered the church.

'Jane is not here, she is at home with a cold,' Jemima said sulkily.

'And so will you be to-morrow, I should say,' replied Miss Cumberland, 'if you have spent the whole day in this vault. So like dear Jane; she regulates her colds with such care—always makes them suit her convenience.'

'What good girls you two must be! must they not, George?' the other Miss Cumberland said, addressing the fair young man.

'Awfully good,' he assented. 'It is absolutely refreshing to see such superhuman goodness. It comes home to a fellow after having been two days in your company, Maude. I have felt myself being demoralised hour after hour.'

'I don't profess goodness,' said Miss Cumberland. 'To live up to

such a character would kill me in three months.'

'Especially if it required you to spend a whole day getting your fingers and toes frost-bitten in a dreadful hideous old church,' the other Miss Cumberland added.

'And, after all,' said George, 'the gardener could do it all in a couple of hours; and do it twice as well,' he added ruthlessly, looking at the Flibbys' pulpit.

'That is the Flibbys' work, I presume,' said Maude. 'It is calculated to strike a stranger forcibly. I remember the shock I had on seeing Netley eclecticism for the first time; I should like to recall it, for the sake of the sensation.'

'We have had such a glorious skate—wish you had been with us.' The last sentence was not true, but Miss Cumberland was good-natured, and pitied the purple noses and dejected air of the Lewthwaite sisters.

'A couple of hours of the Dutch roll makes you feel at peace with all mankind, Miss Lewthwaite,' said George, 'and that is so proper a feeling at this season.'

'Are you not going to decorate the chancel and the font, Miss Cumberland?' Barbara asked.

'Somebody will, I daresay; the gardener and his assistants will probably come down later, and do their worst at high-art decoration. If I were you I should just leave the church as it is; let old Robinson and our men clean it up, and go home and toast before a good fire. Your cousin has imposed on you shamefully sending you here. You need not tell her I said it; but she is such a terrible sham, talking parish when she is from home, and doing nothing when she is here. My mother went up to call on your mother to-day, Miss Lewthwaite, and we hope you'll all come to us on St. Stephen's-day.'

'If they survive to-day, you

should add,' said Maude. 'You would have been much better with your skates on, and enjoying yourselves as we did. But then you are evidently two exceedingly good girls, which my cousin and I are not.'

Tired and benumbed, the Lewthwaite sisters crept home. It seemed as if they would never feel warm again; and cousin Jane ignored their sufferings in the cause of the parish, and only said she forgot to mention about the Flibbys.

Christmas-day was cold and foggy, and after an early dinner there was a terribly long dull evening to be got through before bedtime. Nothing had come about as the girls had expected. Even the wild bells were unable to ring out across the snow, because the ropes were old and would not bear the strain.

Severe colds, caught in the damp church, settled down on both sisters, and they spent St. Stephen's-day in bed, more dead than alive. Their mother, cousin Henry, and cousin Jane had the glories and dissipation of the manor house dinner all to themselves. Cousin Jane assured the sisters afterwards that they had suffered no loss by being absent, for it was a very stupid affair from first to last. Maude Cumberland was a minx, and her betrothed, Mr. George Winthrop,

a young man whose manners would not be tolerated in any decent society.

As soon as convalescence permitted, Mrs. Lewthwaite removed her daughters to their own house in London, to poor much-despised Bayswater.

Barbara has lost her belief in country Christmases and churches with ivy-mantled towers. Jemima and she are of opinion that the people who write alluring accounts of old English hospitality, with yule-logs, mistletoe, and Sir Roger de Coverley, must have invented the whole system.

Cousin Jane added insult to injury, for she wrote to a mutual friend a withering denunciation of the Lewthwaites' tactics, which she said had never for one moment imposed upon her. After dragging the girls round half the watering-places in England in search of husbands, Mrs. Lewthwaite had gone down to Netley to seize on poor dear Jane's innocent father for one of her daughters. But he had been mercifully delivered from the snare of the fowler, even from that great and audacious one of those two girls pretending they liked parish work and longed to decorate a country church. But one must be prepared to find depravity in the denizens of a city like London.

HALF-HOURS WITH SOME OLD AMBASSADORS.

IV.

THE STORY OF THE CHEVALIER D'EON.

EVEN at this distance of time, and after all the researches made by historians and antiquarians, the extraordinary career of the Chevalier d'Eon, a diplomatist who puzzled the whole of Europe, remains to a great extent enveloped in mystery. It is well known that, for some time, owing to the effeminacy of his features and his general appearance, he was enabled to pass himself off as a woman, though sufficient grounds have scarcely been shown as yet why he should have adopted this disguise. Some documents have been recovered, however, which prove that the veil which wraps round the Count's extraordinary and romantic history is not wholly impenetrable.

Charles Geneviève Louise Auguste André Timothée d'Eon de Beaumont, commonly called the Chevalier d'Eon, was intimately connected with secret diplomacy in England in the years 1764-66—a period when the Count de Broglie drew up a memorandum containing a project for the invasion of England, and submitted it to the King of France. But before dealing with the Chevalier's policy at the Court of St. James's during this memorable time, we will give a brief sketch of his singular career. It appears that he was the son of a gentleman of an ancient and respectable family at Tonnerre, in Burgundy, where he was born on the 2d of October 1728. The register of

his baptism stated the child to have been a male; but it was subsequently alleged by some that the sex was originally doubtful, and that family reasons induced the parents, who had lost their only son just before the birth of the Chevalier, to educate the infant as one of that sex to which it was eventually proved that he belonged. After being under parental tuition for some years, at the age of thirteen he was removed to the Mazarin College at Paris. The double loss of his father and of a rich uncle cast him, at the close of his studies, entirely upon his own resources. But he found a good friend in the Prince de Conti, an admirer of his deceased father, who introduced him to Louis XV. From being a cornet of Dragoons, D'Eon was placed in the office of M. de Savigny, Intendant of the Généralité of Paris. While here, he published pamphlets and the like on finance, and made himself very useful to his superiors. When only twenty-seven years of age it is said that he was engaged under the Chevalier Douglas in transacting a delicate and important negotiation at the Court of St. Petersburg, by which, after a long period of estrangement, marked by an entire suspension of intercourse, the Courts of France and Russia became reconciled. This report, although for years accepted as genuine, has now been shown to be quite unfounded; but it is per-

fectly true that in 1757 D'Eon was at St. Petersburg as Secretary to the Embassy under Douglas. Only this was after Douglas had successfully negotiated the intricate and difficult matter for which D'Eon was long given a large portion of the credit.

For five years D'Eon remained in St. Petersburg; but in 1762 we find him engaged with his regiment under Marshal Broglie on the Rhine. The Duke de Nivernais having been appointed ambassador to England, to negotiate the peace of 1763, D'Eon appeared as his secretary. It is this episode in his career with which we shall hereafter deal fully; so, for the present, we pass on to notice that the Chevalier remained in England until the death of Louis XV. In 1771 certain doubts as to his sex began to be current in England, these doubts having travelled from St. Petersburg, where suspicion was first aroused. Gambling policies of assurance to a large amount were effected on his sex in London. An action rising out of one of these policies came before Lord Mansfield in 1777. The plaintiff, one Hayes, a surgeon, sued the defendant Jaques, a broker, for the sum of 700*l.*; Jaques having, some time before, received premiums of fifteen guineas per cent, for every one of which he stood engaged to return a hundred whenever it should be proved that the Chevalier was a woman. Two witnesses, a French surgeon and a newspaper editor, swore positively that D'Eon was a woman. Defendant pleaded that the plaintiff knew this at the time of making the wager, and therefore that it was unfair. Lord Mansfield strongly condemned the whole affair, but affirmed the legality of the wager. As no evidence was brought forward to contradict the

statement that the Chevalier was a woman, Hayes obtained a verdict with costs. This is now known to have been a false verdict. The question was for a second time solemnly argued before Lord Mansfield in the Court of King's Bench. The defendant pleading a late Act of Parliament for non-payment, it was admitted to be binding, by which decision all the insurers in this disreputable transaction were mulcted of their expected gains. The Chevalier was accused by his enemies of being an accomplice in these transactions; and so great was the popular feeling against him, that in August 1777 he was obliged to leave England. Before doing so, nevertheless, he asserted his innocence of the fraud; and writing to one of the newspapers on the matter, he referred to a previous notice issued by him in 1775, cautioning all persons concerned not to pay any sums due on the policies which had been effected on the subject of his sex, and declaring that he would rebut the evidence given on this subject if his master would permit him to return to England. But the fact remains that he did not attempt to disprove the assertions made.

It is very extraordinary, however, that on his return to France he should again have assumed the female dress, even although, as he alleged, the French Government insisted upon his doing so. He stated that at first he distinctly declined to comply with the wishes of the King in this matter; and it was not till he had been imprisoned for some weeks in the castle of Dijon that the apprehension of consequences still more unpleasant, and, on the other hand, a promise of the most substantial marks of court favour, induced him to assume the fe-

male character and garb—which, having again adopted, he now continued systematically to support, preserving the closest secrecy on the subject of his sex until the day of his death. Having thus fallen in with the wishes of the Court, the pension granted to him by Louis XV. was continued. More than this, he was allowed to wear the Cross of St. Louis, while acknowledgment was made of his civil and military services, and he was appointed to a situation in the Queen's household. The State reasons assigned as the basis of the strange requirements on the part of the French Court do not seem to have been made very apparent.

It does not appear, further, why the Chevalier fell from his high estate; but in 1785 we find that he was again in England, and that he continued to reside here until his death. He became very straitened in his circumstances, having been deprived of his pension as a consequence of the French Revolution; and a petition which he addressed to the National Assembly, as Madame d'Eon, in 1792, begging to be restored to the army with seniority, &c., was rejected. Exhibitions of his fencing skill, with the sale of his effects, enabled him to live for some years; but for a considerable period before his death, which occurred on the 21st of May 1810, he had been greatly reduced, alike in health as in circumstances. After his death the corpse was examined by professional men and others, and while the fact that he belonged to the male sex was substantiated, there were peculiarities in his person which modified the surprise that he should have been able for so long to personate the opposite sex. The body of the deceased was interred in the old burial-ground of St. Pancras.

Such is, in brief, an account of one of the most extraordinary careers of the last century. Mentally, the Chevalier was a very superior person. His scholarship was wide, and he was acquainted with a great number of ancient and modern languages. That portion of his valuable library which had not been sold to meet his necessities was disposed of after his death. He left behind him no fewer than fourteen works by his own hand, one of which alone, entitled *Loinis du Chevalier d'Eon*, extended to thirteen volumes. It includes sketches of the chief countries in Europe. The person to whom was intrusted his manuscripts wrote of him after his death: 'In religion, M. d'Eon was a sincere Catholic, but divested of all bigotry; few were so well acquainted with the Biblical writings, or devoted more time to the study of religious subjects. The shades in his character were the most inflexible tenacity of disposition, and a great degree of pride and self-opinion; a general distrust and suspicion of others; and a violence of temper which could brook no opposition. To these failings may be traced the principal misfortunes of his life; a life in which there was much labour and suffering, mixed with very little repose.' It is one more curious commentary upon the unstable favouritism of kings and courts, that the Chevalier d'Eon, who began as it were with the diplomatic ball at his feet, should have died in absolute poverty.

At one time great scandal was caused by a calumny, which connected the name of the Chevalier with that of Queen Charlotte, the consort of George III.; but Mr. Thoms did good service in exposing this calumny some years ago, in *Notes and Queries*. The un-

founded rumours were published with great circumstantiality in a memoir of the Chevalier d'Eon, by M. Gaillardet, published in 1836. In a new edition of this work, however, issued many years later, a singular preface appeared, entitled *Un Acte de Contrition et un Acte d'Accusation*, and never apparently was there so much justification for an act of contrition, whatever becomes of the act of accusation. But it was not until the appearance of a work entitled *Un Hermaphrodite*, consisting of 301 pages, 222 of which were taken bodily from M. Gaillardet's book, that the latter chivalrous author felt inclined to move in the matter. The result was very discreditable to himself. He was really responsible for the calumnies that there was an intrigue between Queen Charlotte and D'Eon; that they had stolen interviews; that George IV. was regarded and spoken of as the son of the Chevalier, and not of George III.; that the King was extremely jealous; that D'Eon and the Queen were discovered together at two o'clock in the morning at an assignation; together with other fancied love-passages, &c. Mr. Thoms very justly and indignantly complained that this scandal was referred to as recently as 1858, not in an obscure publication little likely to be referred to, but in that popular, well-known, and frequently consulted book, the *Nouvelle Biographie Générale*. 'It is true that the editor of the *Biographie* doubts the truth of the story; but, nevertheless, in this work of recognised authority, M. Gaillardet's figment is treated, not as the gross libel which it is, but as the deliberate statement of one who had made the life of the alleged partner of the Queen's misconduct his special study.' The whole of the circumstances attend-

ing both M. Gaillardet's work, and the publication which was a *rechauffée* of it, were anything but creditable to French authorship and journalism.

But we now come to the celebrated project for the invasion of England. This project was conceived by the Count de Broglie in 1763. He knew that the French King was imbued with bitter recollections towards England, and the peace which had just been concluded had left her in exclusive command of all the seas. The Count had, therefore, plenty of ground to work upon, and he thought it was only necessary to lay before his master a parallel of the resources of France and England, to make him recognise the immense superiority of the former. He saw that to attack England was not only to strike the first blow at the commencement of a new war; but it was the only one which could repair all the disadvantages of the recently concluded peace, and give France again the first place amongst European nations. His Majesty expressed himself willing to consider the plan, which was accordingly drawn up, with much elaborateness of detail, by the Count de Broglie. England was reconnoitred, and plans were suggested for creating a diversion; but in the end the preparatory measures indicated were not taken—either a projected concentration of artillery, premeditated action in concert with Spain, or the suggested foreign policy of the Count.

Nevertheless, as appears from the secret correspondence recently published by the Duc de Broglie, his ancestor did actually conceive and propose to the King the gigantic plan of an invasion of England. It seems incredible that the King, with his strong common sense, should have en-

couraged for a moment this wild and visionary scheme; but he did so, hatred of England blinding his better judgment for the moment. Royal sanction was accorded to the project on the 7th of April 1763, and the Count de Broglie at once set to work. He could not do this single-handed. He required, in the first place, a competent engineer, who could survey the English coasts, draw up plans, &c., and also a trustworthy political agent, to whom he could confide his hopes and his great designs. The former he found in the Marquis de la Rozière, an officer with a distinguished career of service, and much experience acquired in various parts of the globe. The Marquis received his Majesty's commands, with an order for one thousand livres a month from the privy purse. But extreme caution was required; and as the Marquis, from his position, would be sure to attract attention and cause suspicion in England, it was arranged that he should himself retain no documents whatever of a compromising nature, and that he should be provided with a confidential correspondent in England. The person chosen for this office was our friend the Chevalier d'Eon, First Secretary of the French Ambassador in London. The choice was a most unfortunate one, as the Count de Broglie lived to discover. The Chevalier was an imprudent and dangerous man to intrust with such extraordinary secrets.

He had been guilty of many questionable acts in the early years of his diplomatic career, but nevertheless he was much trusted by the Duke de Nivernais and other powerful diplomatists. Having successfully completed the ratification of the treaty that had been signed at Fontainebleau,

he received the Cross of St. Louis from the King's own hands. He was also made much of by the Duchess de Nivernais, the Countess de Gisors, the Countess de Rochefort, and other beautiful and accomplished ladies. When the Count de Broglie suggested to him his new mission, the Chevalier embraced it with ardour, and invented a system of correspondence by cipher, in which the King was to figure as the advocate, Tercier as his attorney, the Count de Broglie as his deputy, the Duke de Nivernais as the mellifluous, Choiseul as the porcelain, Durand as the prudent, the Duke de Praslin as the bitter, and D'Eon himself as the intrepid. But he did more than this. Being resolved upon appearing in England with no lower rank than that of Minister, he compassed the resignation of the Duke de Nivernais. But the Count de Guercy, Marquis of Nangis, was appointed the Duke's successor. It was speedily discovered that Guercy was not a good man for the post, and after much intrigue D'Eon was sent over to London as resident. Quarrels ensued between the Chevalier and Guercy, and the former appears to have been very insolent on many occasions. Once when the Duke de Nivernais had ventured to offer some mild remonstrances on the subject of his personal expenses, D'Eon made a sarcastic reply. 'Complaints are made,' he said to the Duke, 'of the expense of my table; why not complain of the stable? Is it because the horses are not mine? *Apropos* of this, I recollect a foppish fellow boasting to me one day of the sums he spent on his stable. "Why," I said to him, "you could keep twice the number of clever people for less money." "Ha, ha," said he, "that is true enough; but my horses serve to

draw me about." "Well," replied I, "clever people already carry you on their shoulders." Other anecdotes are related of the Chevalier's ready but dangerous tongue. He spent money lavishly in keeping up the station and dignity of Minister; and when a great number of French *litterati* and savans arrived in England—a deputation appointed by the Academy of Sciences to proceed to the equator to calculate the earth's meridian—he received them almost royally. Horace Walpole describes a splendid fête given at Strawberry Hill to these learned visitors, when D'Eon figured as their chaperon. All this gave vast dissatisfaction at Paris and Versailles, while Guérchy was greatly chagrined at being thus distanced by the brilliant young diplomatist. Meantime, D'Eon wrote in the most inflated style concerning his good fortune to the Count de Broglie. 'Providence,' he observed in one letter, 'favours me more than I deserve. In vain I shut the door in the face of Fortune; she knocks down the walls in order to get at me.'

It became obvious that the presence together in London of an ambassador and a minister—to wit, Guérchy and D'Eon—was quite impracticable. An intimation was gently conveyed to the Chevalier to this effect, the result of which was that he wrote some very impudent letters to the Duke de Nivernais. Guérchy, who was a blundering kind of individual, and not at all deft with the pen, wrote to D'Eon in the hope of smoothing over matters, but only made them worse. But Guérchy had several grievances against the Chevalier, and amongst others he complained of the number of servants who were kept at his expense, as well as the amount

of gratuities bestowed on certain occasions. D'Eon's reply was probably unique for its coolness and insolence. 'No man,' he said, 'can measure himself, even in his own opinion, without comparing himself with one or many others. Many proverbs prove this, as for instance, "He is as stupid as a thousand, as wicked as four, as niggardly as ten." This is the only scale of comparison we can use, except in certain cases where men measure themselves by women. Thus, we must find out the proportion existing between a minister plenipotentiary captain of dragoons, who has been through ten political campaigns, and an ambassador lieutenant-general who is making his *début*. With respect to the gratuities, it is absolutely necessary to make them to all these people; if you do not, they will besiege the door, make a diabolical uproar, and end by an indecent dance. Luckily, I am a bachelor; when you are here you will have to see to this. Ask the Duke de Nivernais whether he had not once to pay more than fifteen guineas to bribe them to leave off.' The Count de Broglie and M. Tercier now not unnaturally became alarmed that their secret should be in the hands of a man of this kind; but they ought to have thought of this before. Tercier wrote first a friendly letter to the Chevalier, advising him to moderate his pretensions, but flattering him on the score of his intrepid spirit, the loftiness of his sentiments, and his disinterested philosophy. But he begged him to abstain from jests, which, though excellent of their kind, were never taken in good part. 'The Count de Broglie,' added the writer, 'would be inconsolable if the affair that he has commenced so well were to fail; send me, by the first opportunity that presents

itself, news likely to give him satisfaction.' As no news of this kind came, however, the Count himself volunteered some paternal advice to D'Eon. Referring to the way in which the latter had written to M. de Praslin, he said, 'I can only tell you that if you had written to me in the same style, although I love you with all my heart, and believe you to be in every way capable, I should have ordered you at once to leave one of the secretaries in charge in London, and to return, never to be employed again. Could you not have done better than to give way to sorry jest and sarcasm, such as should never be resorted to by a sensible man? To these reasons, which appear to me irrefutable, I will add that on this occasion you have been doubly to blame to risk your recall from a post in which you know that you are useful and agreeable to his Majesty.'

The bold and bombastic character of the Chevalier was patent from his reply to Tercier, which ran as follows: 'I am a victim here to tricks, baseness, and diabolical injustice on the part of those who are ruthlessly sacrificing the public affairs, and who form a triumvirate of illustrious cheats. They have, I believe, sworn to make me go out of this world to seek for rest; but in my frail body God has placed a heart and soul upright and brave, capable of daring and undertaking anything for the sake of justice, truth, and the good of the King's service. I am ready to sacrifice myself in order to reveal the truth to his Majesty, and show him what injustice is perpetrated against his most faithful servants. This is, indeed, the reign of rogues; they want to invade everything, to swallow up everything; but the little David with one fell stroke

overthrew the huge Goliath; likewise with one blow I will overthrow the column and the mountain of their lies. Whatever happens, I will not leave England till the fruit which the King looks for from my zeal is, in accordance with his wishes, brought to full maturity. From the manner in which Guerchy is behaving to me, I think it likely he will fall, like Sancho Panza, or rather like Paillasse when he tried to dance on the rope, and they took away the ladder, all four feet in the air. We have a good master, but he has bad servants.' The author of this astounding epistle followed it up with another, equally characteristic, addressed to the Duke de Praslin, the upshot being that it was impossible to keep D'Eon where he was. De Praslin determined to ask the King to order his recall at the same time that Guerchy left for the Embassy in London.

D'Eon now called into play an invention that would have made his fortune on any journal devoted to imaginative literature. He asserted that the reason for the Duke de Praslin's hatred of him was the discovery of a secret correspondence between the King and himself. He further boldly stated, in relating the discovery of this correspondence, that the King's mistress, Madame de Pompadour, had observed that her royal lover wore a chain round his neck, with a golden key suspended from it, with which he never parted, and which belonged to an elegant little cabinet in a secret boudoir. D'Eon affirmed that this was 'a sort of sanctuary or holy of holies, in which the will of the sovereign took refuge. He remained king only of this piece of furniture—the only part of his States which he had not allowed this courtesan to invade

and profane, the only jewel of his crown which he had not laid at her feet. To all her entreaties he returned the laconic and peremptory reply, "It contains State papers." These papers were no other than the correspondence of Count de Broglie and my own. The Marquise suspected this; and besides, it was quite enough that the cabinet was interdicted to make her long for it, forbidden fruit always possessing irresistible attractions to a woman. One night, having supped with the King, Madame de Pompadour was more bewitching than ever, and she contrived to add the intoxication of wine to that of love. The King soon became drowsy, and fell into a deep sleep. This was the moment for which the treacherous Bacchante was waiting. While the King slept, she took the much-desired key, opened the coveted cabinet, and found enough to confirm all her suspicions. From that day my fate was sealed.' D'Eon further affirmed that when the King discovered what had occurred he sent for Tercier, who found him pale and agitated, and begged him to let the Chevalier know that a storm was about to burst over his head.

Such was D'Eon's explanation of his disgrace, which was as remarkable for its ingenuity as it was for its lack of truth. As the Duc de Broglie has shown, in the year 1763 the popularity of Madame de Pompadour was on the wane, and she no longer occupied the position which this story would imply. But there were many other reasons for regarding D'Eon's narrative as completely apocryphal. The Chevalier also asserted that the King, when he acceded at length to his recall, did so with the greatest reluctance, writing him a private note to the effect

that he was to take notice his dismissal was not agreeable to him, but that he consented to it in appearance only. This was quite untrue, as the King at once saw that D'Eon's recall was necessary. All that his Majesty cared about was to preserve the great secret intact. In the end a very abrupt letter of recall was sent to D'Eon, directing him to leave London at once and proceed to Paris, where he was to report himself to M. de Praslin. Then, without going to Court, he was to await further orders. When this document, which was virtually an order of exile, was presented to D'Eon, his grief and rage knew no bounds. He exhibited symptoms which justified a previous charge of mental aberration that had been insinuated against him. At a party at Lord Halifax's he nearly brought himself into a duel with one of his own countrymen. Now the Chevalier was really a favourite at the English Court, especially in the circle of the Queen. His manners were agreeable and captivating, and the news of his recall excited lively feelings of regret. This almost emboldened him to essay the task of bringing the King of France to his knees. But another extraordinary project soon presented itself to his inventive mind. Dining on one occasion at the Embassy with the Countess de Guerchy and her daughter, he pretended to be poisoned with the wine, and when the Count came to inquire after him, he assumed himself to be the object of a persecution whose aim was the discovery of his secret. He secretly left the house on the following night, and sought out his kinsman, M. de la Rozière, whom he begged to take charge of his important papers and convey them to France. La Rozière set out,

but only with a portion of the papers, for D'Eon had kept back the most important, bearing upon the King's secret, intending to use them. He next informed Count de Guerchy that he was no longer under his authority, and that notwithstanding his commands, he should not present his letters of recall to the King of England; he also declined to give an account of the sums he had drawn in Guerchy's name from the banker of the Embassy.

Guerchy was nonplussed and agitated, and not less so was the King, who foolishly wrote off to Guerchy and confessed to the secret nature of the papers which D'Eon had in his possession, and which were to be recovered at all hazards. The Count de Broglie was terribly alarmed by these things, knowing that the secret was in danger, and that Guerchy would be sure to reveal it. Meanwhile the Chevalier knew his power. When he was applied to in various ways respecting the papers in his possession, he first assumed an apparently friendly and yielding attitude, but one which he soon changed. He demanded that he should be left in London, along with the ambassador, retaining his title of Minister, and receiving almost equal allowances. The French Government, driven to some stratagem, officially demanded the extradition of the Chevalier; but he was entitled to the protection of the English law, and on the demand being put to the vote in the Privy Council it was negatived unanimously. D'Eon was extremely anxious to learn the decision of the Council, and Lord Halifax informed him for his satisfaction that while his conduct was execrable, his person was inviolable! But to satisfy the French King, D'Eon was forbidden to appear at Court.

Guerchy, having failed to procure the papers, was compelled to inform his royal master of the fact. On one occasion, when D'Eon was approached on the subject, he seized his gun, pointed it at the persons present, and cried, 'You will find the papers of the King at the end of this; come and take them!' Under ordinary circumstances in this country the Chevalier would certainly have been regarded as a lunatic from his actions.

Meanwhile, what was to be done? The situation was perplexing and alarming. 'What would the Cabinet of Great Britain—what would the nation, already in a state of irritation because the Ministers had not imposed more arduous conditions on its rival—say, when it should learn that the King of France, immediately after a treaty guaranteed by his word as a gentleman, and sealed with his royal signet, was preparing, through the medium of obscure spies, for the invasion of England?' For the Count de Broglie especially, the originator of this scheme, affairs were anything but pleasant. Seeing that the Chevalier would never return to France with the prospect of perpetual imprisonment hanging over him, he advised the King that Guerchy should be commanded to leave D'Eon in peace, and that one of his own friends should be sent over as the bearer of an order in the King's own hand, desiring him in affectionate terms to return, with a special assurance that the royal protection should not fail him. But there was difficulty in procuring a trusty messenger, and in the mean time proceedings in France were instituted against the Chevalier. He was declared to be degraded from his titles, rank, and dignities, was deprived of his allowances, and was adjudged

guilty of high treason. This was bad policy, seeing that the Chevalier was free to do what he liked in England with the compromising documents in his possession. At this juncture the De Broglie family were recalled to Court, and the Count, naturally desirous to deliver his King from the awkward predicament in which he was placed, sent a friendly messenger to D'Eon. When M. de Nort, this emissary, reached London, he was astonished to find the city ringing with the D'Eon scandal. The Chevalier had published a volume containing all his private correspondence with the Dukes de Nivernais and De Praslin and the Count de Guerchy, though he still refrained from divulging the royal secret or the contents of the official documents in his possession. But what guarantee was there that he would refrain from doing so much longer? There was great excitement in England over the Chevalier's volume, which could only have the effect of setting the three great French diplomatists mortally by the ears. Guerchy seems to have gained the sympathy of the foreign ambassadors and other powerful people, and a prosecution was commenced against D'Eon by the English Attorney-General.

Walpole, in giving a picture of the Chevalier at this time, wrote: 'The miserable lunatic was at the opera yesterday, looking as if he had come straight from Bedlam. He never goes out unarmed, and threatens (as I believe him quite capable of doing) to kill some one, or to kill himself, if any one looks like laying hands on him.' But the 'miserable lunatic' was not without friends. The Opposition in the English Parliament took up his case; and there was every probability that he would come to be regarded like the notorious

John Wilkes, as a martyr to the cause of the liberty of the press. Writing to Tercier, D'Eon himself said: 'The leaders of the Opposition have offered me any sum I like to name if I will hand over to them my papers and despatches, duly closed and sealed, and have promised to return them to me in the same state with the money. I open my heart to you, and you know how repugnant to my character such an expedient is; nevertheless, if I am abandoned, what can I do! . . . The sacrifice will be a hard one for me to make, I confess; it will cost France dear, and this thought alone wrings tears from me.' He added that the London mob, who were at the command of the Opposition, would excite a riot in his behalf, and burn down the French Embassy. Finally, he said he would answer for nothing if he did not receive redress by the 23d of April. The French Cabinet might make up their minds to a war at once, for the King of England would be compelled to declare war by the voice of the nation.

The restoration of the De Broglies to Court favour, and the death of Madame de Pompadour, made the Chevalier believe for the moment that his star was in the ascendant, and he wrote a humble letter of submission to the King. But having read the letter brought by the messenger of peace, M. de Nort, and finding in it neither a promise of Guerchy's dismissal, nor his own installation in his former rank, he became as violent and implacable as ever. He now absolutely refused to give up anything, or to enter into any negotiation. He was brought a little to reason by Tercier, but still he insisted on Guerchy's dismissal. 'In my place you would not do otherwise,' he wrote to the Count

de Broglie. 'No one in the world shall make me give up these papers so long as M. de Guerchy remains ambassador in England. If his Majesty were pleased to appoint you ambassador, or the Marshal, I can assure you that, owing to the high estimation in which the Marshal is held here, the affairs of France would immediately assume quite another aspect. The law-suit would fall to the ground of itself; for I should at once hand you my papers, and all would be at an end.' De Broglie thought that Guerchy should be ordered to relinquish the persecution of D'Eon, but the King did not send an order for this. There was some project of carrying off D'Eon, and police spies were sent from Paris to watch him. Shortly afterwards a lull took place in the activity of the various combatants. At the close of the autumn of 1764, the case against D'Eon came on in the Court of King's Bench. D'Eon did not appear, and was condemned by default for an outrage on an ambassador in the exercise of his functions. The officers sought for the Chevalier at his lodgings, in order to make known to him the sentence of the court; but they could discover neither him nor his papers. D'Eon had not really disappeared, and in a few days he astonished his enemies and the whole of the City of London by lodging a criminal information against the Count de Guerchy for an attempt to poison him. To support this ridiculous charge—which he had advanced once before, only to see it completely discredited—D'Eon now secured a witness in one De Vergy, an adventurer, who was incensed against Guerchy on account of having been discharged from his employ. Vergy even went so far as to say that he had been a participator in the attempts to kill

D'Eon; and when a declaration to this effect was drawn up, he swore that he was ready to affirm it on his honour before God and man, to sign it and to seal it with his blood. He repeated the affirmation on oath before the Court of King's Bench, and duly lodged a formal indictment. Guerchy's first thought on hearing of the accusation was one of horror and amazement. 'I thought that D'Eon's past actions had reached the culminating point of wickedness,' he said; 'but nothing that he has yet done approaches what he has just invented: it really makes one shudder with horror.' He never imagined, however, that the project could be seriously entertained. But D'Eon actively pursued his diabolical scheme. He wrote both to the Marshal and the Count de Broglie; but neither would have anything to do with him, though the latter was as terrified as ever for the safety of the secret. At this juncture, or on the 10th of January 1765, one Hugonnet, D'Eon's *valet de chambre*, was arrested at Calais while carrying despatches written in the hand of Drouet, Count de Broglie's secretary. Hugonnet had been watched for some time, and the fact of his carrying on a correspondence with a State criminal was of itself a misdemeanour. Drouet was next arrested, and the two agents were consigned to the Bastille.

The King of France now took another incredibly foolish step. He imparted the great secret to M. de Sartines, the Lieutenant of Police, in whose charge the prisoners were. Sartines was infinitely surprised, as well he might be, at being thus made his sovereign's confidant; but no surprise can be felt at the confession of the King himself, that he was getting a little perplexed over the

whole affair. When the documents discovered upon the culprits were scrutinised, however, it was found that there was nothing particularly damaging in them; but in order to divest them of all suspicion, when the prisoners came to be examined they were tampered with, M. de Jumilhac, Governor of the Bastille, being taken into confidence in the matter. But when this little affair had been settled, the Count de Broglie, fearful lest worse should yet supervene, not only actually proposed to the King that he should be sent to England to obtain the fatal autograph from D'Eon, but that he (De Broglie) should mortgage his own estate for the sum to be paid to the Chevalier in lieu of his annual pension of twelve thousand francs!

But while this was going on, the trial of the French ambassador at the Old Bailey took place, on the absurd charge raised by D'Eon. London was amazed to find, on the 1st of March 1765, that a true bill had been found against the Count de Guerchy on the charge of attempted assassination. D'Eon now gave himself all the airs of one who had won his game; and, in writing to the Count de Broglie, said, 'This is the last letter I shall have the honour of writing to you relative to that scoundrel Guerchy, the prisoner, who ought to be broken on the wheel in France, if there were any justice there. But, thank God, he will only be hanged in England, as Count de Sea was in Cromwell's reign.' The Chevalier was a little too precipitate, though he did manage to give the French King and his Court a terrible fright. The English Cabinet appealed from the finding of the grand jury to the Court of King's Bench, in virtue of a writ of *certiorari*. The superior court then

pronounced a *nolle prosequi*; and no other process than that indicated by the grand jury being suggested, the prosecution fell through, and Guerchy was freed from a charge which very few individuals believed in. But the London mob, irritated at what seemed an evasion of justice, made it so warm for Guerchy, that he was obliged to leave the Embassy and return to France.

D'Eon was now triumphant, and received with great satisfaction a proposition from the Count de Broglie to the effect that by-gones were to be by-gones, and that things were to go on as before. The fact now came out that in the interval between his own conviction for slander and his criminal charge against Guerchy, the Chevalier had been concealed in the house of a Frenchwoman of doubtful character in the guise of a woman. This accounts for his mysterious disappearance, which we have already alluded to. There was now sent to London, in Guerchy's place as Minister Plenipotentiary, M. Durand, formerly Minister at Warsaw. On the 11th of July 1766, Durand successfully obtained from the Chevalier D'Eon that which had caused the French King and others many a *mauvais quart d'heure*. On that day the Chevalier placed in M. Durand's hands the private and secret order of the King, written and signed with his own hand, dated the 5th of June 1763, and addressed to M. d'Eon. The order, which was in good condition, was wrapped in double parchment, and addressed to his Majesty. It was handed to M. Durand enclosed and cemented inside a hollow brick, which brick was taken from the foundation wall of the cellar, and afterwards returned to its place.

Of course the irascible secretary

did not surrender his treasure without a 'consideration,' and this was duly set forth in the following royal document: 'In return for services rendered to me in Russia, in my army, and in other posts where I have placed him, by the *Sieur d'Eon*, I willingly grant him an annual salary of 12,000 livres, which I will cause to be punctually paid to him every three months, in whatever country he may be, except in my enemy's country in time of war, until I may think proper to give him some post of which the emolument shall be greater than his present salary.—*LOUIS*.' This order was countersigned and attested by *M. Durand*. The Count de Broglie now hinted that he should like to have his own papers returned, but the Chevalier did

not see it. On the contrary, he carefully lodged all the Count's papers with *Mr. Coates*, one of the leading members of the English Opposition, who had frequently, as he alleged, begged him to make himself an English citizen, and to leave France—a country 'where no one is ever sure of sleeping in his own bed.'

So ended the strange story of the Chevalier d'Eon's connection with the King's secret. It is a singular romance, having for its central figure one who, with all his folly, insolence, braggadocio, and apparent disinterestedness in his sovereign's service, had yet a keen eye for the main chance, and could withal render himself exceedingly unpleasant and dangerous to his companions and confederates.

THE SENIOR PARTNER.

BY MRS. J. H. RIDDELL, AUTHOR OF 'GEORGE GEITH,' ETC.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

MISS NICOL IS DISAPPOINTED.

OVER the waves of success the new barque Pousnett & Co. (Limited) floated gaily.

David McCullagh had not over-shot the mark when he implied the shares were being snapped up eagerly. Pousnetta' was about the first house with a great reputation to take the initiative of 'allowing the general public to participate in its profits,' and the general public proved itself grateful for the chance afforded.

Before the City had got over its surprise at the march Mr. Pousnett seemed to have stolen on every one, not a single share remained unsubscribed, and at the end of the first twelvemonth the twenty-pound shares were quoted at thirty-five.

They paid a fair dividend, but not so large, it was explained, as the business would ultimately permit, for the Indian Mutiny affected Pousnetts' trade, and the quondam Senior Partner, now Managing Director, did not deem it prudent to recommend a higher rate than nine percent for the half-year ending at Christmas 1857.

Everything went on smilingly in Leadenhall-street—clerks, directors, former partners, porters, all looked bathed in the sunshine of prosperity. Mr. Herrion Pousnett was blander and more gracious than ever. He sometimes bought goods from Mr. McCullagh, which he took very excellent care to have invoiced to him

at the same price as he could purchase in the Minorities; and on such occasions he quite overpowered Mr. Roy with his condescension, balancing himself on an office-stool, and talking business over with the bookkeeper, just, said Mr. Roy, 'as if he were no more nor myself.'

Even Mr. McCullagh could not always resist the charm of his manners, though he declared he'd 'never be able to abide him now he had given that daughter of his in marriage to the old lord, who might be her grandfather or great-grandfather, for that matter.'

Captain Crawford, left completely out in the cold, found a ready sympathiser in Mr. McCullagh.

'It's just awful to think of,' he said. 'Why, I'm quite a young man—a boy—in comparison!'

'The second daughter is going to marry Stoddard after all,' observed the officer; 'but then, he's as rich as Croesus. Ah, they threw me over when the relation, whose property I expected to inherit, married a governess. However, I shall not fret my life away because the woman I loved was false.'

'That's right,' interrupted Mr. McCullagh. 'I'm truly glad to hear ye speak with so much spirit. There's as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it.'

Captain Crawford was so well satisfied with the amount Mr. McCullagh had added to his store that he begged him still to take charge of his money.

'At some future day I may feel

glad to know I am a comparatively rich man,' he said, with a smile he tried to make bright, but which bore traces of the trouble he had battled with.

'There is no state of life or mind,' answered Mr. McCullagh, 'that's possible to man where worldly gear doesn't prove a comfort.'

Whatever Captain Crawford's sentiments might be, he did not feel inclined to discuss them, although the conversation took place at a friendly dinner provided by Mr. McCullagh, not, however, in Basinghall-street.

During the course of the year which had elapsed since the senior partner retired modestly from that exalted position, and 'consented' to take the management of a million of money, David and Archibald McCullagh had over in the Borough started a great Scotch warehouse on their own account, with a branch at Liverpool in which Kenneth had an interest, and another at Glasgow that was managed by a clerk under the direction and supervision of old Mr. Johnston.

There was not a thing likely or unlikely those young men had not in stock. Their lists were of an appalling length. 'At ten minutes' notice,' said David, 'I'd victual a man-of-war.' They did not stand nice about bribing when a few pounds would secure a good order. They were always about. There seemed no one they failed to make acquaintance with. They lived together in Trinity-square, on what was then usually, and often still is, called the 'wrong side of the water.'

Full, perhaps, of the Pretender and that toast which used to be drunk while passing the glass over a carafe, 'The King—God bless him!' Mr. McCullagh once innocently asked an acquaintance what he meant *now* by the phrase.

The question was greeted with merriment. 'Why,' said his friend, 'Surrey ain't Middlesex, nor the Borough the City, work it how you will.'

So far Mr. McCullagh in Crutched Friars was skimming the cream of the trade. His old connection and his established character for selling none save the best goods to be had in the market still kept him ahead of the newcomers; but he had sense enough to see this could not last—that more dangerous competitors than his sons or cousins would eventually arise, and that he could not, to use his somewhat melancholy phrase, 'hope to keep a grip of the market for ever.'

'But enough custom will bide wi' me, Mr. Roy, I'm thinkin',' he said, 'to serve my turn; and for those that come after—they must take their chance. Young blood working upon my own pattern, but keeping foot wi' the times, might have kept the old business well thegither, but it wasn't to be. It's strange that out o' four sons there's not one o' the lot I'd care to see carrying on this business after me.'

'I've long had a notion,' answered Mr. Roy, 'that ye made too much money to be happy for yourself or well for your family.'

'I'm happy enough,' retorted Mr. McCullagh; 'and as for my money, I made it by pinching myself, which is more nor ever a child I had will do.'

'That's just what I say; they know ye've lived before them.'

'It would make small odds to Robert if I'd never lived,' observed Mr. McCullagh. 'He wants nothing from me. The way Pousnetts' is flourishing is, I am given to understand, just beyond belief.'

'I met Mr. Robert the other day,' hazarded the clerk.

'Ay, indeed.'

'He stopped me, and was most affable; asked particularly after your health.'

'Much obliged to him, I'm sure.'

'He's looking well; the company agrees with him better apparently nor ever the partnership did. He's got his old colour back and his jaunty ways again, that, indeed, I used to be sorry to see were gone. They're moving from Islington, he tells me, to Brunswick-square.'

'I wonder that's grand enough,' sneered Mr. McCullagh. 'If he'd said he was flitting to Grosvenor or Cavendish-square, now, that would have been nearer the mark.'

'We might live to see him in one or the other yet,' ventured Mr. Roy, on whom Robert's great prosperity and Robert's extraordinary politeness had made a deep impression.

'We might live to see him in Buckingham Palace, for the matter o' that,' replied Mr. McCullagh.

If he had but realised the fact, the Scotch merchant would have known he was deadly jealous of the 'uplift' his son had got in the world. That notwithstanding he had, after a fashion, excommunicated his 'double-faced first-born,' Robert should go on and prosper, seemed to him some sort of a mistake on the part of Providence. It was the more crazing because Mr. McCullagh felt he had been hasty in ordering husband and wife off his premises, and laying them both under the ban of his displeasure. There was an expression in Robert's eyes as he looked in his father's face which 'minded' that father of something wistful and pitiful he had seen in his wife's expression when she lay dying.

He could not forget the look; it haunted him; it was the appeal of a weak character to a strong,

of a feeble nature to a harsh stern judge. As for Janey, he had not patience to think of her; she whose arts and wiles had, he felt confident, brought about the whole mischief. 'Her well got-up' glance of innocence, surprise, and indignation maddened him to remember. 'As if it was my fault,' he added, to strengthen his resolution, 'that Robert lied to me!'

An exchange of letters had taken place between father and son, in which the latter remarked he had not told a falsehood; he had merely suppressed a truth which concerned himself only. In reply Mr. McCullagh took highly moral ground, asserting a prevarication was worse than a lie, because it was a 'coward thing;' and that the matter concerned all Robert's friends, who had made fools of themselves through being led to believe Mr. Pousnett had taken into partnership a man without sixpence, and whose brains 'couldn't even by the most partial be deemed an equivalent for the want of capital.'

When Mr. McCullagh laid himself out to be disagreeable, it is but simple justice to say he succeeded in his endeavour; and so many nasty remarks did he contrive to squeeze into a not very lengthy epistle that Robert, tearing the paper into shreds, angrily declared he would never write nor speak to his father again.

But Robert's was not the nature to bear malice long, and even had it been, the peacemaker Janey must ultimately have brought better feeling into the question. After the birth of their first child, a girl, both mother and father, moved by some curious sympathy of feeling, wrote to Mr. McCullagh, but without mentioning to each other what they had done.

Both were influenced by the same feeling, both inspired by

the same hope. 'Now, at least,' they thought, 'he will become friends again,' and so Janey trusted, in answer to her letter, she should receive a reply she could show triumphantly to Robert, and Robert believed his father would return an answer which might close up old wounds, and comfort Janey for the great trouble he knew she had experienced ever since the quarrel, if that could indeed be called a quarrel which was entirely on one side.

Janey simply sent a few lines, saying she had a little daughter, and that, now she was a mother, it grieved her more than ever to feel Robert was separated from his father. It was a sweet tender note, and touched Mr. McCullagh more than he cared to confess. Most unhappily on the top of it came Robert's epistle, which, causing Mr. McCullagh to consider 'how keen they were to make it up with him,' hardened his heart to a greater degree than ever. After trusting his father would come to the christening, and let 'by-gones be by-gones,' Robert said, 'We think of naming our child Annie, if you have no objection.'

'Call your child what you like,' answered plain auld Rab; 'it's no affair of mine. It is very good, I am sure, of you to invite me to the christening, but I must decline being one of the party;' while to Janey he wrote not a single word, good, bad, or indifferent; and Robert, too much mortified by the slap in the face he had received to mention the correspondence to his wife, maintained an utter silence on the subject.

Pousnett & Co. (Limited) had proved, as the young man considered, a matter of little less than temporal salvation to him.

For his portion of the spoil he received such a pocketful of shares as enabled him, with the help of Mr. Snow's skilful manipulation, to pay that gentleman off ere the company was eighteen months old.

'Now or never,' thought the genial Snow; and it is unnecessary to say he decided on the first alternative. If it be true, as is cynically asserted, 'that an undertaker should get his bill settled while the mourners' eyes are still wet,' it is surely equally wise to have any matter depending upon Limited Liability put on a proper footing while the concern is in the full swing of its first success.

'You had better get rid of me first,' suggested Mr. Snow, with a quiet smile. 'Other expenses will be coming on. You will want possibly to launch out a bit, and you will feel far happier when you are relieved from this millstone of debt.'

As there chanced to be nothing Robert more ardently desired than to be out of Mr. Snow's books, the little affair was so judiciously managed that one happy night he was able to tell his wife,

'I have paid off the last instalment of that seven thousand pounds.'

'Then you are quite clear, Robert?'

'Yes, quite. I don't owe any man a shilling.'

Under the circumstances it was perhaps the most natural thing in the world for a person so situated at once to place himself in a position where he would have the chance of owing many men shillings. He had stinted and saved to pay Mr. Snow; he had sickened to see how hard he should find it to get out of debt; he had discerned no chance of 'enjoying life,' as the phrase goes; he had felt vexed at being obliged

to 'doom Janey to poverty'; and then all in a moment relief came. He saw his way to getting out of debt, enjoying life, and 'allowing Janey to take her proper place in society.' It was like a transformation scene—so like, Robert, as he walked about the City streets a rich and prosperous man, could scarcely believe the fortune which had come to him as real: he almost imagined he should wake some morning and find it had been all a dream.

The way Mr. Snow managed to get a sufficient number of the shares in Pousnett & Co. (Limited) off his hands to recoup himself, and yet draw no attention to the transaction, would have seemed extraordinarily clever if other shares in the same company had not been changing owners in a like stealthy and secret manner. There never were any shares going about begging. Generally it was supposed shares in Pousnetts' could not be had for love or money. Nevertheless, here and there a few were to be picked up at a long price under extraordinary circumstances. Some one wanted to go abroad, or died, or was bankrupt, or went mad, and then the word went round that if any one desired to avail himself of such a chance, why, there it was, and he ought to take advantage of it.

At the early period of its life, Limited Liability was considered an innocent sort of baby, calculated to give pleasure to many persons, and incapable of inflicting injury on man, woman, or child. That it should ever grow up into the hardened rascal we have seen figuring before magistrates, judges, and vice-chancellors, lying, scheming, thieving, cheating, robbing the widow and orphan, picking the pockets of governesses and clergymen, none,

save a very, very few, had foresight enough to conceive—indeed, it may be doubted whether any one could have imagined Limited Liability capable of producing the wide-spread misery, wickedness, and swindling it has done. For the last five-and-twenty years, it would seem truly as though every law, no matter how apparently beneficent in its intentions, had been passed solely in the interests of cheats and schemers and adventurers. Somehow the poor sheep is always shorn; somehow it is always the person who ought not to have the fleece that gets it.

Pousnetts' was the very first private business which formed itself into a company under the new Act, and the result proved abundantly the wisdom of the senior partner in so soon taking that gullible bull, the public, by its horns.

As has been said, the shares increased immensely in value, the business thrived and prospered, great men added their names to the direction. Each dividend meeting proved better than the last. Always a great and notable house, Pousnetts' grew greater and more notable still. Bankers, merchants, mayors, aldermen, citizens, and country gentlemen, all knelt down and did homage to Pousnetts'; there were times when, in the secret recesses of his heart, Mr. McCullagh, wise and prudent and cautious as he was, almost wished 'he had not been just so ready to say no about that matter of joining the Board.'

Mr. Pousnett had wanted him once, though he did not want him now, and if he only could have reconciled it to his conscience to become one of the head fraternity, in what excellent company he might have made his appearance in the character of director!

Mr. McCullagh was, in fact, in the position of a lady who, having said she does not wish to go to a ball, and who, perhaps, is very sincere in her expression of opinion, hears, with a pang, the carriage drive off without her. Pousnettes' business carriage seemed 'stopping the way' everywhere, and Mr. McCullagh was not in it. He had not even so much to do with the house as might have been the case. That unlucky quarrel with Robert, which need never have taken place if the news had come upon him in a different and less sudden fashion, or if Robert would have eaten a piece of humble-pie, and not 'threeped' upon his father that Janey knew nothing whatever about his business or money matters, or the details of the partnership, or Mr. Snow's loan, must deter him for ever from taking the smallest pride out of the great house his son was connected with.

Of course he never could 'make up' matters with Robert again. If he did it would look as if the riches and the grandeur of Pousnettes' had wrought a change in his opinions. 'Everybody was getting rich and grand,' thought poor Mr. McCullagh, who, having till quite lately been the sun of a very small system, the greatest and wealthiest luminary his narrow circle of acquaintances boasted, could not reconcile himself in a minute to the fact that, while he was plodding along the old track, other quite new persons were shooting on ahead.

After fifty a man who has all his life kept in one groove, and become wedded to one course of thought, does not take kindly to rapid changes. Mr. McCullagh had set his face against the Great Exhibition, which, for some reason best understood by himself, he regarded as unscriptural

and a tempting of Providence, and during the long evenings, when he often now felt very lonely, he was wont to consider all the evils that had recently come upon the country were to be traced back to the World's Fair, which he had gone and 'taken a keek at like any other fool.' Business ways were all turned upside down; everybody now wanted to be master, servants were never content till they could call themselves principals, and principals had no other aim or object in view than to merge their identity in limited companies.

It was hard on a man who had always regarded Fortune as a height to be scaled very cautiously to see men rush at the citadel and carry it by storm. He had, in the course of years, carefully and painfully sowed, and reaped, and garnered his store, and now he saw harvests apparently larger planted and gathered, so to speak, within a day.

There was Snow, for example: he had nothing to say against Mr. Snow, who, he daresay, was, for a man of his trade, honest enough; but he, Mr. McCullagh, could remember a time, and that not so long ago, when a common money-lender, a man who professedly advanced cash on usury, could not have leapt all in a minute from a couple of petty offices in Bush-lane to great premises in King William-street, where he had at least a dozen young men clerks, and shining mahogany counters, and brass rails you could see your face in, and desks of the very best, and a couple of waiting-rooms newly carpeted and handsomely fitted up, and a grand private office for himself; where when he wanted anything he struck a bell, just as in the old Eastern tales great folks clapped their hands and a slave

appeared. And then to see the way even big bankers got on with him was something beyond Mr. McCullagh. He had heard the manager of the establishment he honoured by keeping his account, and who he really thought would be above that sort of currying favour, say, 'We won't keep you waiting, Mr. Snow. What can we do for you to-day?' and then, with his own ears, and not any other person's, he had further heard Mr. Snow remark as cool as ice on a summer's day, he wanted to overdraw five thousand, and the manager answer, 'O, certainly, with pleasure.'

After that, thought plain old Rab, who had never asked leave to overdraw five pence in his life, the world must be coming to an end. Indeed, there were times when, if it had not been for leaving his money behind, Mr. McCullagh felt the best thing he could do was to quit the world altogether.

'I don't know what we are coming to, Mr. Roy,' he often observed sadly; and with a considerable amount of truth Mr. Roy answered that neither did he.

And still Pousnetts' Company prospered, and Mr. Snow in his new capacity did a business which filled many a man besides Mr. McCullagh with wonder and envy. Pousnetts' triumph was, after all, not extraordinary; but it did seem wonderful that Snow should carry everything before him as he did. How were outsiders to understand the length of time that gentleman had been silently cutting for himself the steps by which he meant to climb? He could have told them of weeks, months, years, during which he had been pushing forward to his present goal. He had watched the signs of the times, and prophesied to himself exactly how money was to be made out of the

turn commercial affairs were taking. He had been working up one connection and working out of another; he had been feeling the pulse of bankers till he understood pretty well the temper of those City potentates; he had been making friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; running, what Mr. Alty considered, risks, yet coming out in the long-run victorious; giving a helping hand up difficult ladders, and waiting patiently for the day to come when he could demand his recompense with a certainty almost of getting it.

Altogether, in Mr. McCullagh's opinion, things within the domain of the Dragon and the Grasshopper were being turned upside down. If he did not say they were going to the deuce, it was only because people seemed to be making enormous sums of money with very little trouble; and though it was a state of commercial society which did not recommend itself to the mind of the cautious Scotchman, still he did not feel 'just prepared to say' that the rapidity with which a man who had his wits about him could make a fortune was an unmixed evil. That depended, he considered, upon the care the man with his wits about him took of the fortune after he had made it. Upon the whole, Mr. McCullagh felt inclined to fear it would be lightly come, lightly gone; and, perhaps, with that fear there mixed a certain feeling of Christian satisfaction at the thought that when a good many tremendous profits were scattered to the four winds of heaven, the store 'laid past' by the wise merchant of Basinghall-street would be returning as good interest as it had ever done.

Nevertheless, spite of the money he knew was so well invested,

nothing short of a revolution could reduce him to beggary, Mr. McCullagh felt that in many respects life had of late gone very 'contrairy' with him.

There was Janet, for instance—Janet Nicol, whom he had 'fed and lodged for years beyond count,' and who was, as one might say, mistress of his house; for 'I am sure I never interfered with her,' observed Mr. McCullagh—there was Janet, who had been privileged to look after cheeseparings and save the candle-ends, and economise the coals and see nothing was wasted; whose position in Basinghall-street could not be considered other than that of 'just the lady;' who was free to go and free to come; who could have her own visitors, and who had them; who could go out to tea, or dinner, or supper, whenever she pleased, and never a wry word spoken; who engaged the servants, and discharged each unsatisfactory lass at her own goodwill; who, as long as she kept within certain bounds, was never asked to account for her 'spendings;' whose bed had been one of roses; whose waking moments ought to have proved, in the opinion of her relations, one long delight—there was Janet going to leave him; Janet able to say, without a tear on her cheek or break in her voice, it was time they parted company.

'What's put that notion in your head?' asked Mr. McCullagh, when the lady mooted this question.

Miss Nicol went on with her needlework, and did not immediately reply.

'If there's any secret in the matter, I don't want to intrude,' said her kinsman, who really was devoured by curiosity.

'It's not exactly a secret,' replied Miss Nicol, evidently anx-

ious to be pressed to an explanation.

'Then ye'd best tell me your reason—that is, if ye have got one.'

'The long and the short of it is,' began Miss Nicol; and then she paused, and deliberately threaded her needle—'I've made up my mind to get married.'

'Weel,' answered Mr. McCullagh, who was taken completely aback, but who felt he would have died rather than evince his astonishment, 'better late nor never, ye know, Janet.'

'That's just what I think myself,' agreed the lady, calmly indifferent to anything in the remark which may have struck her as uncomplimentary.

'And ye'll have looked out a good man for yourself, I'll warrant,' suggested Mr. McCullagh, by way of gently leading up to further explanation.

'A good enough man has looked out me,' amended Miss Nicol.

'That's the way I should have worded my remark,' said her kinsman deprecatingly. 'As ye'll have made it up between yourselves, I suppose there's no offence in asking his name.'

'No offence at all. I am very sure, Mr. McCullagh, it's not through any goodwill of mine I want to leave ye.'

'And I can honestly say it is not through any good-will of mine ye are going to leave me.'

'I'd far and away rather stay with ye.'

'Then why don't ye?'

'I'll stay if ye ask me.'

'O, if that's all, I'll ask ye fast enough,' Mr. McCullagh began, when, a look in Miss Nicol's face warning him he had got on ticklish ground, he leapt the morass, and added hurriedly—'that is, I would ask ye to stop on as ye are, if I did not mind me of what I

said just now about it being better to get married late nor never; so if ye have found somebody wants ye and not your money, it would be foolish and wrong of me to say a word to stop ye taking him.'

That was about the last chance she would ever have, and Miss Nicol recognised the urgency of her position. She was not a forward woman, or the same roof would not have covered her and Mr. McCullagh for so many years; but yet at that supreme moment she felt if she nothing ventured, she would nothing get. When it came to actual reality, or the 'bit,' as she mentally expressed it, 'he could never part her—never.'

'Don't ye think yourself,' she commenced diplomatically, at the same time tracing an invisible pattern on the table-cover with the point of her needle, 'that people are happier married than single?'

'It all depends, Janet,' he answered; 'and I really could not take it upon myself to advise ye for or against.'

'But if ye now had a wife, wouldn't ye be more comfortable and content?'

'I had a wife once, if ye mind,' he replied, using the last word in the sense of remember.

'Ay, but I don't mean that! If ye had a suitable wife, near your own age, and of your own way of thinking.'

'It's not me that is going to be married; and there is no good, therefore, in concedering the question so far as I am concerned,' observed Mr. McCullagh, who was now trebly on his guard. 'Ye haven't told me yet the name of the lucky man ye've chosen.'

'Before I do that I'd fain know if you're no like ever to think of taking a second wife yourself. One suitable, as I said before, and who wouldn't come to ye empty-handed

either;' and Miss Nicol blushed, actually blushed, and the busy needle traced another invisible pattern more rapidly than before.

Clearly there was no evading the question, and Mr. McCullagh perceiving this grappled it like a man.

'I'll be plain wi' ye, Janet,' he said, 'and I'll try no to vex ye if I can help it. I've aye seen ye'd a fancy for me.' Had any one been there to observe Mr. McCullagh as he made this confession—his sheepish look of gratified vanity, his firm resolution not to be caught napping, the twinkle in his small keen eyes, the half smile playing over his sharp shrewd face, the alert uprightness of his mean figure, the look of delight in himself and pity for a woman whose devotion he could never reward—the whole scene would have proved too grotesque for risible nerves even under the strictest control, and an outbreak of laughter must have broken up the proceedings.

As, however, Janet and plain auld Rab had the field all to themselves, he continued gravely, 'And I can truthfully say I'm greatly beholden, to ye for it. But I've no thought of that sort at all. If it had ever been in my mind I'd have told ye so, long and long ago. Your money can make no difference to me; for your own sake I'm glad ye have it, and hope ye won't throw it and yourself away on anybody maybe not just worthy; but I'm no for taking a wife, and if I stay in the notion I'm in at present I never shall be. So now that we understand one another, tell me who it is wants ye.'

'I'm sure I'd never have thought of him, if—' began Miss Nicol, and then she stopped, bashfully deferring the evil moment.

'If ye could have gotten me,' finished Mr. McCullagh, feeling

for the moment his own manifold attractions were to be regretted, seeing the 'heart-break' they had caused. 'Weel, Janet, ye're no the first as has picked out the one man it was no sort of good for any woman to set her cap at, from among the lave; and it's no use, as you're aware, crying over spilt milk, or, what's much the same, milk ye can't get. As ye think ye'll be best married ye've done a wise thing to look about ye. Who is it ye've made up your mind to go to church with?'

'My cousin, John Nicol.'

'Ay, ay,' said Mr. McCullagh, and volumes seemed contained in the twice-repeated monosyllable.

'He's never to say lost a sneaking fondness for me,' pursued Miss Nicol.

'That's all right,' answered her relation, feeling the remark committed him to nothing.

'And as other folks think so little of me, I ought to be the more obliged to him.'

'No doubt, no doubt.'

'I know ye never liked him, Mr. McCullagh.'

'What would ail me liking him?'

'Ye've spoke about his temper.'

'Have I? It's possible; but it's not I'll have to put up with it.'

'And I don't deny,' went on Miss Nicol, who, as she could not rush at Mr. McCullagh and tear out a handful of his sandy hair, meant to vent a portion of her disappointment in some of those 'side wipes' in the administration of which she was an adept, 'he is a thought "near;" but I've had to be careful enough here, careful enough, the Lord knows, with plenty and to spare in your pocket for a man who never said "thank ye;" and it'll come second nature to me to save for myself and my husband.'

'There's a deal of sense in ye, Janet, when ye express it.'

'I'm glad ye think so. What I said to myself was, "What's the use of saving and pinching to add pounds to thousands I'll never have share of!" All the years I've lived in this house ye never gave me a present, but that French cashmere dress when your wife died.'

'Ye needn't stand for presents now,' observed Mr. McCullagh, who felt the conversation was taking a turn he did not like at all. 'John 'll be emptying the shops for ye.'

'He'll be doing no such thing,' answered Miss Nicol. 'What I want I'll have money to buy for myself, and he knows it; but I'll be in my own house and over my own servants, and studying my own interests, and saving in one thing to pay for another; that's just how the matter stands; and the irritated Janet recommenced her sewing with such vehemence that she instantly snapped the needle in two.

'Ye've done it now,' said Mr. McCullagh dryly; but whether his utterance referred to the accident, or the happy state of existence indicated, he did not explain, and Miss Nicol did not inquire.

'I'd advise ye,' he went on, as she sought in her work-box for another needle, 'to have your money settled snug and fast on yourself. Whatever way things turn ye'll no repent that being made sure. It would be a sore pity for ye to go and do the day's work Effie got through when she married young Hunt.'

'If ye can say an ill word against Effie, ye'll not keep silent, I'm aware.'

'I'm not saying anything against Effie. I suppose ye'll not deny he has got the whole of her money in his own hand.'

'I know nothing about it,' snapped Miss Nicol viciously.

'Weel, weel, if you don't, I do,' replied Mr. McCullagh, with which successful utterance he retired from the discussion.

What he stated was perfectly true. Deep as she was, Effie had met with some one deeper. When the news of her good fortune came, her first intention most undoubtedly was to throw over Mr. Hunt. Effie Nicol with three thousand pounds was a very different person, even in her own eyes, from Effie without a shilling. She could do better, she felt, than marry a clerk, and a clerk too out of a situation.

Mrs. Olfradine, who knew a great deal more about human nature than she had ever done about music, and who understood Effie as women do not often understand each other, soon saw how the land lay, and without loss of time gave her nephew a hint to discontinue his visits.

Now it is one matter to determine to turn a cold shoulder towards an impecunious lover, and another to be totally deserted by the lover himself. Effie did not know what to make of this defection—for she and Hunt were actually engaged. Days passed, weeks, and at last a month elapsed, and still no sign or word from the young man.

'Is William ill?' she asked Mrs. Olfradine at last.

'Not that I have heard of,' was the reply. 'What made you think he was ill?'

'He has not been near us for so long.'

'You would not have him coming about the house now, would you?'

'Why not?'

'And have people saying he was after your money.'

'He was not after my money when I hadn't any.'

'Yes, but you have got it now, and nobody would remember you were as poor as himself when he first asked you.'

'I think he might have waited till I told him to stay away.'

'I don't think that would have shown much spirit,' observed Mrs. Olfradine; 'and another thing is, he's no doubt busy, for he has got a place where I am told the hours are very long.'

'What place has he got?' Effie inquired; but Mrs. Olfradine did not, or would not, know. The extent of her information appeared to be the young man was idle no longer. 'And a good thing too,' she added; 'poor people can't afford to be out of situations.'

It was not long ere Effie heard quite casually from an acquaintance of the Hunts that William had got into a right good berth at last. Two hundred and fifty pounds a year was the salary mentioned; his abilities, unappreciated at Mr. Snow's, having met from his new employers with proper recognition. Effie said nothing, but she thought a great deal, and when, at the end of another month, she met Mr. Hunt, she greeted him with a graciousness to which he responded by a sad humility, which in mournful depression might have matched Effie's own manner in the old days at Basinghall-street.

It was not easy for Effie to be playful, but she tried her best to assume that character, as she observed, in the words of a homely if not elegant proverb, 'that a sight of him was good for sore eyes.' 'Ye have made yourself quite a stranger,' she added.

'Only since strange things have happened,' he answered. 'I did not care to presume on old acquaintance, and put you to the trouble of saying you would rather have my room than my company.'

On both sides the conversation was long and diplomatic, and when at last they separated Mr. Hunt contrived to leave on Effie's mind the impression that he wished to terminate the engagement.

'He's doing first-rate, I'm sure,' considered Effie, an idea the young man's reticence confirmed rather than dispelled. He would not tell her the name of the firm he was with, or what he was doing, or how he got his situation.

'I lost one through you, Effie,' he said, 'or rather through trying to please you, and I won't jeopardise my means of living a second time.'

'It would be a pity, and you getting such a salary,' answered Effie. 'Two hundred and fifty pounds a year—no less. Times have changed.'

'Whoever told you I was getting that amount didn't stand nice about speaking the truth,' he observed.

'Well, maybe your pay isn't far short,' she insinuated.

'Whatever it is can't matter to you now,' said Mr. William Hunt. 'With your fortune, what's two or even three hundred a year?'

'Ye had only fifty-five when I first knew ye.'

'And you had nothing at all,' he retorted.

It was a curious way of wooing, but apparently Mr. Hunt knew how to please his mistress, for one morning, without 'by your leave or with your leave,' without bridesmaids, best man, carriages, settlements, friends, favours, or bouquets, Effie Nicol and William Hunt were made one at the parish church of St. John's, Deptford.

Nobody except the bride and bridegroom were supposed to know anything about the matter. Immediately after the ceremony Mr. and Mrs. Hunt took possession of

lodgings previously prepared for their reception, where they lived for a short time economically, as befitted persons of their condition just starting in the race matrimonial.

It was not long, however, before Effie, aspiring to a 'house of her own,' broached the question to her lord and master, who informed her, with an utter absence of circumlocution, that they could not afford such nonsense.

'Not afford it?' repeated Effie, wondering; 'with my money, and you getting so big a salary?'

Mr. Hunt laughed bitterly.

'I am getting no salary, Effie,' he said; 'and it seems to me I never shall in this country.'

'Have you lost your situation?' she asked.

'Yes, that I have.'

'And not got another?'

'No; I've enemies here will prevent me ever getting on: old Snow, and that precious Alfred Mostin, and a whole lot of them.'

Effie did not answer; the news seemed to her too awful for comment. She had given herself and her money freely; but when she did so she believed she was getting a substantial enough *quid* for her *quo*. The idea of her husband losing situation after situation was a notion which had never occurred to her. At Mr. McCullagh's the same faces greeted customers year in, year out. Except to better themselves his clerks did not leave him, and very seldom indeed even to do that. She did not know what to make of her position. She had to take refuge in her usual resort, and without confidant or comforter think over her husband's emphatic words in silence.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

BY THE SAD SEA WAVES.

MR. ALFRED MOSTIN sat alone in his old office in North-street. He had not 'worked himself out of the Robert McCullagh & Co. house in the Minorities; quite the contrary. Messrs. Robert McCullagh & Co. were persuaded he was the sharpest and most energetic fellow in England; he took orders from under the very nose of his relations in Basinghall-street; he literally paved his morning rounds with falsehoods; he could outlie even Mr. David McCullagh, and burrow quicker after information than Archie. If the trade had then been capable of the amount of extension that has since been compassed; had tinned meats from Australia, fruits from America, salmon from Newfoundland, milk from Norway, soups from Heaven knows where, tongues, rabbits, hares, pheasants, ox-cheek, fish, flesh, fowl, red herrings, lobsters, and crabs, formed at that period, as they do now, an integral part of the 'Scotch' trade, it is difficult to conjecture to what heights Mr. Alfred Mostin might not have carried his employers' business; but such things were at that time only in their infancy, if they were actually born. Even Mr. McCullagh, who was in many things in advance of his age, would have scoffed the idea to scorn of offering a two-pound tin of mutton across the counter retail for a shilling, at which price elegant economists can now regale themselves upon that article; the battle of tinned meat cooked to rags had still to be fought and won; in a word, the business first started in Basinghall-street, and which for so many prosperous years Mr. McCullagh had all to himself, was still circumscribed.

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It and the millions were not yet *en rapport*. It seemed incapable of supporting so many firms, more especially as in preserves, jellies, sauces, and confectionery many powerful opponents had arisen in England.

'Hang the trade!' thought Alfred Mostin; 'there must be some way of pushing it if one only could come at it.' As yet he had not been able to 'come at it,' and the only idea he found himself in a position to advance for the benefit of his principals was, that if they allowed him to establish a 'branch' in North-street, Finsbury, and supply him with goods, something might eventually be done in the way of replenishing an exchequer which had a nasty habit of running short.

Accordingly the board which had once borne the announcement of the Schlaxenbergers Seidlitz Company and the Anglo-Irish Lace Association now informed all whom it might concern that 'McGregor, Chalmers, & Holderstein' occupied the second floor. McGregor and Chalmers were supposed to be Glasgow manufacturers, Holderstein a foreign capitalist. Mr. Alfred Mostin was known to be manager of this firm, and to have authority to indorse cheques, draw and accept bills, do everything, in fact, except, as it seemed, pay money. For that simple operation he always required to consult somebody in the background, who appeared to have an insuperable objection to parting with even ten shillings. The way settlements with creditors were staved off was simply marvellous, and the manner in which they bore the treatment they received more extraordinary still.

Mr. Mostin, then, was sitting quite alone in his front office when a gentle tap sounded at the door.

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'Come in,' he cried; but apparently the person without failed to hear, for the knock was repeated, this time a little louder.

'Come in, whoever you are!' roared Mr. Mostin, who was balancing his person on one leg of the office stool, and beating time to some wordless tune with the office ruler.

As the door slowly opened, and a head timidly appeared looking into the room, Alf Mostin brought his stool down on its four legs at once, and, involuntarily hitting the desk a tremendous bang with the ruler, exclaimed,

'Effie, by all that's wonderful!'

'Ay, it's me,' said Effie meekly.

'My dear soul, you do me too much honour,' observed Mr. Mostin. 'Why, in all the time we have known each other, you have never come to see me before.'

'No,' she agreed, glancing nervously around her.

'Perhaps you would rather come into the other room,' suggested Mr. Mostin, who read signs of feminine distress both in her look and manner. 'Nobody will disturb us there. What's wrong?' he added, as he ushered her into the apartment where Mr. Robert McCullagh found his relation frying bacon on the morning when he first heard Mr. Snow's name.

'O, there's not much wrong,' answered Effie.

He inducted her into the arm-chair, and waited. He knew Effie of old, and was not aware of the causes which had conspired to render her less self-contained. To get anything out of her had ever been a work of time; and Mr. Mostin having at that moment abundant leisure decided to let it wait on her inclination. She did not try his patience long, however. Finding he did not ask any further question, but stood si-

lently contemplating her in his favourite attitude, she herself broke cover.

'I've just been round to your friend Mr. Snow,' she began.

'To beg Hunt on again?' conjectured Mr. Mostin.

'Nothing of the sort; though Mr. Snow might do worse than take him.'

'He might,' agreed Alf; and then apparently fell into a reverie as to the nature of the 'worse' suggested.

'It's no use your speaking against him, you know,' said Effie viciously, 'because everybody is aware he can work, and work well.'

'I have said nothing against Mr. Hunt,' remarked the North-street hermit mildly. 'I have no doubt he can work, and work well, if he chooses.'

'And of course he would choose if he had half a chance.'

For a moment Mr. Mostin looked puzzled; then he said,

'My dear Miss Effie, it will save us both a great deal of trouble if you tell me in a word the errand which brought you here. I of course am only too charmed to see you; but I am afraid our feelings are not reciprocal, wherefore you must have called upon me with a purpose. Now what is it—in a sentence?' added Alf, seeing that his visitor once again hesitated.

'In a sentence, then,' repeated Effie, 'I want to ask you not to hinder William making his bread. He has got a right to make it as well as you.'

'I have not hindered him making bread, or anything else.'

'O, yes, you have,' with a little scornful curl of her thin lips.

'In the name of all that's marvellous, how?'

'By, when he does light on a good chance, going to his em-

ployers and getting them to turn him adrift.'

Mr. Mostin looked at his visitor in amazement; then solemnly raising his eyes to the ceiling, he said, addressing an invisible audience,

'Am I mad, or is this lady? When have I gone to this young man's employers since he left Snow? When had he any employer, since Snow turned him out of his office, to turn him adrift? At what period did he "light on"—I quote Miss Effie—a good chance since he and the dear Snow parted company?'

'It is of no use trying to fool me,' observed Effie impatiently.

'And, my dear creature, although you have dropped into three thousand pounds, it is of no use trying to fool me. Hunt has never had a situation, or the chance of a situation, since he was (figuratively) kicked out of Bush-lane. He has had nothing to do, except for about a month, when he took the place of a friend who was ill in an estate agent's at the West-end. Snow won't give him a character, and the friends he thought he was making, by babbling about Snow's concerns, have thrown him over too. By this time Mr. Hunt may perhaps have found that honesty is the best policy,' added Mr. Mostin, with the virtuous serenity of a man who has never been guilty of a doubtful action in the whole course of his life.

'Are ye tellin' me the truth?' asked Effie, for once surprised out of her self-possession.

'Why on earth should I tell you a lie?' asked Mr. Mostin. 'Are you fond of the chap still, Effie?' he added, with a little softening of voice and manner. 'I am very sorry; for, upon my soul, he is not worth being fond of.'

'Don't say that,' entreated

Effie, with a ring of trouble in her voice, which was not counterfeited.

'Why shouldn't I?' asked Alfred Mostin. 'To use your own country expression, he's a "fause loon," and you and your money are well out of his clutches.'

'Ay, but we're man and wife,' said Effie solemnly.

'You are *what*?' cried Alf, genuinely amazed.

'We're married,' and Effie fell a-sobbing.

Mr. Mostin took a short turn or two up and down the room.

'Well,' he said at last, 'to quote Mr. McCullagh, "this dings a'." How came you to be so left to yourself, Effie?'

She didn't know, she told him; she couldn't make it rightly off; she believed he was earning a mint of money, that he had a good situation, and was in the receipt of good wages. She did not know what to do or to think—on the face of the wide earth, she did not know what to do.

'I never liked ye, Mr. Mostin,' she said, with simple candour; 'but ye might have had a sister placed as I am. Advise me as ye'd advise her.'

'Faith, I will,' answered Alf Mostin heartily. 'To reciprocate your compliment, Effie, I never liked you—as, indeed, I never liked one of the Basinghall-street lot; but if you think my best advice worth the having, you are more than welcome to all I have to give. *Make the best of it, my dear.* The whole bench of bishops, and all the archbishops into the bargain, can't *unmarry* you. I suppose you were fond of Hunt once? he broke off abruptly to say,

'O, I liked him well enough,' answered Effie irritably.

'Then you had best try and get fond of him again. He must have liked you, Effie—though I

honestly tell you I can't imagine why—or he wouldn't have asked you to marry him when you had not sixpence, or told you what lost him his place, when a guinea a week must have seemed a fortune to him. Ah! Delilah, Delilah!' said Mr. Mostin solemnly, shaking his head at limp and colourless Effie, till the absurdity of the comparison caused him to break into a peal of laughter.

'Ye're merry, Mr. Ailfred,' said Mrs. Hunt, tears of anger dimming her pale-blue eyes.

'That am I not,' he answered. 'I suppose you can't understand a man laughing when he feels as little merry as ever he did in his life. It was only a contrast struck my fancy. However, to return. I repeat in different words what I said just now. Make the best of Hunt and your marriage. He's no simpleton. Though he has got your money, I think you may trust him with it. Don't call him names, as is the habit of your charming sex. Don't let your dearest friend know he took you in. Make the best of it, Effie; your secret is safe enough with me. Only, if I were you, I'd never tell him you confided in a man he has such admirable reason to hate as he has your humble servant.'

'What have ye done to him?' asked Effie in wonder.

'Well, my child (I mention this just as a warning, you know), when, on a certain night, Miss Nicol put bad blood between a father and son who were getting to understand each other a little, it seemed to me necessary to trace the matter to its fountain-head. Tracking the stream to its source gave me a lot of trouble—a deuce of a lot, if you will excuse forcible language. But I did track it to your husband; and it was I who told Snow of his doings, and con-

sequently I who got him dismissed from his light and easy post of spy.'

'And if is you, I suppose, who are tracking him now, and preventing him stopping in any situation?'

'Fair and softly, my dear Effie. I like your ebullition of temper, as it proves that already you feel your interests and those of your husband identical; but it is quite uncalled for, I assure you. I have my faults; but to go out of my way to injure a fellow is not one of them. Your husband, as I told you before, has never had any situation to stop in since Snow's office, otherwise he might have stayed in it till Doomsday for me.'

'Do you mean to say that he can't get a situation?'

'There is nothing impossible. If any previous employer likes to recommend him, or he is able to make a quite new start, he may still do well even in London; but Snow *couldn't* give him a character. Duplicate keys, and blabbing an employer's business, are offences no business man can condone. Supposing you found a housemaid out at the same game, eh, Effie?'

'I wonder if my uncle could find him a place?' said Effie, ignoring the parallel Mr. Mostin had suggested.

'If he could he wouldn't, I am very certain.'

'Why not?'

'Because I told him who it was had informed you, and consequently Miss Nicol, about the sum of money Robert paid to be admitted into Pousnetts.'

'Well, it was true, at any rate,' hissed out Effie.

'Quite true, Mrs. Hunt; but when you have lived as long as I—in fact, when you have lived another year or two—you will understand that upon the face of

this earth there is, as a rule, nothing so objectionable as truth in the way people tell it. I have always noticed that truth, like a curse, comes home to roost. If I were you I would quite give up the practise of speaking it.'

Provoked beyond endurance, Effie rose and folded her shawl around her.

'Good-bye,' she remarked. 'Nobody can say ye preach what ye don't practise.'

'Good-bye, Effie,' he answered briskly; 'if you had followed my practice, you would not have stood in need of a sermon from me to-day.'

'What has been the text, please?' she asked scornfully.

'It was divided into many heads,' he answered; 'but if you remember one, it will prove sufficient for the purpose: "Love your husband."'

When she was gone—in the excess of his politeness he escorted her down the dark staircase, and saw her safely out of the door—Mr. Alfred Mostin returned to his stool, and wondered how a good many things would end. The extraordinary part of the business was, that he never wondered how he would end; his own probable future did not trouble him in the least. To this present hour he is quite undecided whether he may not eventually drop into a fortune, or finish his days in the work-house.

The prescience of some persons as regards their fellows is scarcely less remarkable than their total blindness concerning themselves.

No gift of prophecy, no power of calculating chances, could possibly have foreseen those changes in the McCullagh household which, by the middle of the year 1858, left Mr. McCullagh more lonely than he was before his marriage, before wife crossed his

threshold, or child was born to him.

It is one thing never to have possessed; it is another to have had and to have not. God knows the fulness of the one life can never be understood save by the emptiness of the other.

He was a lonely and a desolate man, entering upon that sere and yellow leaf stage of life, when men want every adjunct of a prosperous existence to reconcile them to the autumn, which falls, as most think, so suddenly. To him, at all events, the autumn seemed to have come most unexpectedly. In the ordinary sense of the word he had never known a happy home; but, at least, he could not consider it desolate till now, when he found he must face domestic existence with one old woman in the kitchen to provide such sunshine as was possible over an at best dreary house.

'No, no, no, no,' said plain auld Rab to Mrs. Roy; 'no more of your lady housekeepers, thank ye, for me. We'll just have something plain and homely if there is such an article left in the world; a woman likely to be thankful for an easy master and a quiet place. Ay, she can have help for the cleaning and such-like, and I won't stand out about a pound or two.'

'Wouldn't it be cosy and couthie, James,' said Mrs. Roy to her husband, 'if he would take you into partnership and let us all live together? I could manage that he'd be comfortable, and not at the mercy of servants.'

It seemed a pleasant speculation, but Mr. Roy shook his head. 'There's nothing further from his mind than anything of the sort,' he observed; and Mr. Roy was right.

There are persons who can do that sort of thing—make mutual

homes, take others under their roof, become members of a common family—but Mr. McCullagh was differently constituted. To all intents and purposes he was a man who, if he did not love solitude, preferred to be alone to finding companionship with most of his fellows. Though no one enjoyed a 'sociable evening' more than he, yet he liked to 'keep a good oak door' between himself and the outer world. There were those he could have 'taken up wi;' but 'as they did not seem for him,' all he could do was turn his attention to business with a keener and closer interest than ever.

Yet even on that dear accustomed ground Mr. McCullagh found things were not 'just as they had been.' True he was holding his own—that is to say his sales were little less than they had always been—but as a set-off his expenses were far heavier. And, further, how could a man who had been used to 'sleep beside his trade' reconcile himself to the division between home and counting-house which he had rashly caused? The business once was company to him, and now he had to walk down to Crutched Friars to enjoy the society that had formerly been but across the hall. He could not satisfy himself either the change was good for Mr. Roy. As manager in the absence of the principal he began to 'take on him a bit,' and Mr. McCullagh was forced sometimes to 'say a word;' and then Mr. Roy seemed vexed, and remarked what he did was done for the best. David moreover delighted in telling his father of 'orders that had been lost' in Crutched Friars through no responsible person being in the way; and though Mr. McCullagh knew where Mr. Roy had been on such occasions, and felt pretty

well satisfied no order worth having had ever been lost, still such warnings annoyed him greatly; and besides, he knew the arrangement was one which 'left it in the power of people' to say he was not 'done by properly,' a reflection which vexed him greatly, as he had believed, and rightly, the service rendered for his fair wage was honest and true.

The more Mr. McCullagh saw of the working of that warehouse which he had opened 'for spite,' as he confessed to his own soul with remorse and bitterness, the less he believed in the prudence of the step. He said nothing on the subject, however, to any one, but took such measures as were calculated to bring back the bulk of the trade to Basinghall street, dating all letters from that address, remaining there himself almost constantly, and ignoring so far as seemed prudent and practicable the premises in Crutched Friars as much as possible.

Then he bided his time till he could get rid of those premises, and at a profit, to some firm in quite another line of trade. When that last feat was successfully accomplished, he put a dozen advertisements in the second column of the *Times*, and sent out circulars intimating that on and after a certain date the *old-established and well-known* business of Robert McCullagh would be carried on solely from Basinghall-street, where friends and customers were requested to call and orders should be addressed.

'He's mad—clean mad,' observed Mr. David McCullagh, when his eye caught the advertisement; and he went straight off to Crutched Friars, thinking to secure the vacated premises. When he arrived he found a score of men at work—painting, hammering, whitewashing, knocking

down partitions, and carrying in planks. All over the front were stretched great posters announcing that on the 1st of the next month, No. — Crutched Friars would be opened by Messrs. Ephraim & Aaron, clothiers and outfitters, as an East-end branch of their great emporium in Holborn.

Returning by way of Basinghall-street, and 'looking in as he passed,' David beheld his father in the old familiar corner; Mr. Roy seated at his former desk, as if he had never left it for a day; Alick appearing from the cellars, whither he had been despatched to ascertain the amount of biscuit available that afternoon for a 'big order,' and the warehouse so crowded with customers, Mr. McCullagh could only give him a nod, while speech of Mr. Roy except on business was not to be had.

For a person who was 'mad' Mr. McCullagh had laid his plans with singular discretion. Even the second-born was fain to say to his brother that after all the 'old man' knew what he was about. 'He wouldn't let us have a ghost of a chance, ye see.'

So far, then, Mr. McCullagh had no great cause for complaining of fortune. He was adding to that store laid by for those who should come after him. His investments were, as usual, paying good interest; he had a sufficiency of pecuniary ventures on hand to interest and occupy him. The woman who looked after his household gave little cause for complaint. If she was somewhat lavish in the use of coals, she cost him little or nothing for house-flannel and other oilmen's goods. She cooked his rasher of bacon in the morning, and his chop or steak for dinner. At the proper hour she had the water boiling for toddy; and if a friend 'dropped

in' she would run out and get half a pound of salt beef, or a crab, or a lobster if cheap, and set forth the table with such special delicacies as she was able to secure,—bread, cheese, oat-cake, and a jug of ale from the nearest public.

For a long time past beer had not been taken in the four and a half gallon measure the establishment once regaled itself upon. There was no one to consume so large a quantity. The house-keeper was allowed her shilling a week, and could buy ale if she liked, or let it alone; while as for the master, he preferred a 'drappie' of whisky-and-water cold with his dinner. To live after such a fashion it scarcely seemed worth while to have toiled and pinched and saved and added pound to pound; but *chacon à son goût*, and upon the whole there can be little doubt that as money is power, Mr. McCullagh's system was not a bad one.

One thing, at all events, is certain: had he lived differently he could never have been so rich a man. Company is not merely costly in a pecuniary point, but of necessity it is wasteful as regards time. It is not often the man who makes who can afford to spend. As a rule one generation gathers and the next scatters; the spend-thrift succeeds the miser; those who have worked are followed by those who play.

If there were one thing Mr. McCullagh found it harder to bear than another it was a fondness for society, which seemed more and more to develop in his sons. They appeared to find no difficulty in combining business and pleasure. When Kenneth and his wife came to London—and they came often—they were always 'on the gad,' while David and Archie looked upon the theatre as the natural place in

which to spend their evening hours of freedom. From the Mostin blood he felt no doubt this evil proceeded; and yet the Bread-street-hill McCullaghs, who were no kin to that objectionable family, were wonderful people for parties and concerts, and all the rest of those entertainments invented for luring honest traders to perdition. To be sure, however, *their* mother was a fly-away madam, who had not worn her widow's weeds two years before she married some 'sprig of gentility.'

'Ay, it's from the women they get it,' thought poor McCullagh; 'the same as Robert's children will learn all manner of evil from their mother.'

That was the bitterest drop in his cup. Robert, whom he had bid leave his house; who was the 'softest' of all his children, and yet had done far the best; who was keeping company with grandees, and greatly thought of in the City; who had two of the prettiest children, a boy and a girl; who could afford to hold out the olive-branch to his father and have it flung back in his face; who was so rich he wanted nothing from him; whose wife had not gone mad, but who instead made friends 'with folks who kept carriages and drove her about with them, and set her up more than ever, as though from the first she had not been enough of the fine lady.'

This was extremely ungrateful and ungracious on the part of Mr. McCullagh, for Janey's soul, while driving in her friend's carriage, yearned after her father-in-law trudging along on foot. She had seen him one day when she was seated opposite Coutts's, and impulsively and involuntarily she uttered a little pleased 'O!' and stretched out her hand to greet him. All

in vain; Mr. McCullagh shot swiftly past, eluding the touch of that pale-gray glove; stone-blind, apparently, to the fact of any one he had ever seen striving to attract his attention, angry at the looks of wonder cast on him by the passers-by, and perfectly cognisant of the pretty bonnet which framed his daughter-in-law's fair face, and the rich attire which seemed to sit as naturally upon her as a print dress had ever done upon Miss Nicol's gaunt frame.

There was another time, too, when he met her in Guildford-street with her little girl. It was the height of summer, and while 'wee Annie' was dressed all in white, the mother wore a beautiful lilac muslin (muslin was in fashion then), and a 'gauzy sort of bonnet with flowers that looked like real, and a beautiful lace shawl; and she carried a parasol with fringe a foot deep.'

Mr. McCullagh stepping smartly along the pavement presented a somewhat unfashionable figure, in an old brown coat, a black and yellow straw hat, a green barred necktie, stout shoes, white stockings, and gray trousers. He was the more easily recognised, however, and Janey stopped and accosted him.

'Do speak to me, Mr. McCullagh,' she entreated; but her entreaty was in vain. He looked her straight in the face, as indeed it was impossible, as she stood, for him to help doing, and cut her dead.

Annie's mother drew the child a little closer to her side, and went on her way with a sad heart. What a terrible thing! she thought. Mr. McCullagh would not rejoice in his son's prosperity.

It did seem hard; there was her own mother, who had so loved wealth and consideration and luxury, and yet to whom all the

comforts now surrounding her meant little or nothing; and Robert's father, who would not cross the threshold of his first-born or speak to him in the street.

Mr. McCullagh, eschewing the main thoroughfares, walked back to the City, seeing nothing but the 'glint' of a lilac dress, hearing nothing save a woman's voice pleading, 'Do speak to me.' 'It was out of the question,' he decided, the way his son's wife refused to believe he wanted nothing to do with them, nothing at all. 'Why can't she content herself with her grand friends? Why must she pester me in the street, and make me look like a fool to the folks going by?'

It was a beautiful day, but the sunshine did not warm Mr. McCullagh's heart; he felt thoroughly 'put out,' and wondered if there was any part of London where he should be sure of not meeting Robert's fine wife.

Hurrying, hurrying on along Warner and Ray and Turnmill and Cowcross streets with rapid feet that were acquainted with every devious inch of the City portion of the metropolis, Mr. McCullagh made his way across Smithfield, and was entering Long-lane, when some one calling out, 'Whither away so fast?' he looked round, and saw he had passed Mr. Pousnett without recognition.

'I thought you meant to cut me,' remarked that gentleman, with the genial smile of one who feels he has suggested an impossible pleasantry.

Mr. McCullagh winced. If he did not intend to cut Mr. Pousnett, he knew on whom he had performed a similar operation not long previously. 'I was deep in thought,' he said, excusing himself, 'and I never expected to meet you in Long-lane.'

'Why not?' asked Mr. Pousnett.

'It's out of your beat entirely.'

'No place is out of my beat,' answered the great man affably, 'where money is to be made.'

'I believe you,' replied Mr. McCullagh, quickly responding to a sentiment so entirely his own; 'I do, indeed.'

'And indeed you may,' said Mr. Pousnett, with the simplicity of truth.

'Lovely weather, isn't it?' said Mr. Pousnett, after they had talked for a couple of minutes according to the fashion where-with City men entertain each other—exchanged a word about politics, and made a few original observations concerning the state of the money-market. 'I am going to run down this afternoon to Norman's Bay to get a whiff of sea air. You ought to come with me, Mr. McCullagh; it would do you all the good in the world.'

'I don't mind if I do,' was Mr. McCullagh's unexpected answer.

Nothing was farther from Mr. Pousnett's mind and wishes than the thought that his invitation would be accepted; but no one, not even the wife of his bosom, could have told, from his countenance, the surprise, not to say dismay, with which Mr. McCullagh's reply filled him.

'That's right,' he exclaimed, in the heartiest manner possible. 'It's the very day for a dash out of town. Will you meet me at Waterloo a little before four? Or stay, better still, I will call round for you, and we can drive over together.'

'In for a penny, in for a pound.' No human being understood better than Mr. Pousnett the policy, if he thought well to be cordial at all, of being cordial exceedingly.

'I wonder what there's about me,' considered Mr. McCullagh

modestly, the while he wended his way homeward, 'that makes everybody so fain for my company! Beside a man like Pousnett, now, I'm not so much to look at, and I've never laid myself out to have high ways or grand talk, or tried to be seductive in my manners. I am, as I've always said I was, just plain auld Rab, with a something of sense in my head, and a pound or two laid by, and no flattering on my tongue or falsehood in my heart; and yet only to consider how I am run after! To make no mention of old friends, who are aye wanting to know when I'll come round and take a bite of dinner and have a glass of toddy—familiar as I ca' them—strangers, as one may say, seem greedy for my society. There's Mr. Pousnett, he could do no more for his brother than go about with him, travelling backwards and forwards. And then there's Janey—a weary Janey she is, too—can't content herself without me, though she has all the goods and vanities of this world about her. Look, too, at Kenneth's wife, a daft sort o' body no doubt; but still she makes more of her father-in-law than of her own father. There's Snow, too, always dropping in and out, and "What's your opinion, Mr. McCullagh? I was passing, and couldn't resist coming in to have a word with you;" and his friend Alty is keener still for knowing me. And Janet would have liked well if I'd made her Mistress McCullagh No. 2; and it seems to me if I'd time I might go on with the list till to-morrow,' finished Mr. McCullagh, prudently ending his self-gratulations, when he found the list of those who delighted in his conversation drawing to a conclusion, as one of his own country ministers finished his sermon, 'I could say

a heap mair, my frens, did time permit.'

He had but leisure to write a few letters, and give various instructions to the faithful Roy—who told every one that afternoon the information did and did not concern, 'Mr. McCullagh was gone down to the shore with Mr. Pousnett'—to pack a few necessary articles, and exchange his 'every-day clothes for his Sunday garments,' when Mr. Pousnett came down the court, and, entering the counting-house, cried out cheerily, 'I hope you are ready, Mr. McCullagh, for we have no time to lose.'

'Not a visage' amongst those true and leal sons of Scotia changed or moved at sight of the great man who stood on the threshold, and yet, as Mr. McCullagh, with a faint streak of colour in his fallow cheeks, skipped nimbly down from his office-stool dressed in his Sabbath-day clothes, his hat in one hand, and a light top-coat hung over his arm, he was conscious of a thrill of exultation which passed through the breasts of his retainers.

The journey proved delightful. A lovely afternoon, a beautiful country, an express train, a most 'conversable' companion; what could a man like Mr. McCullagh, who had no bills coming due, and who felt no dread of duns calling at *his* office, desire more? Time sped as fast as the engine, the talk changed and varied as much as the aspect of the landscape. Hitherto Mr. McCullagh's longer travels had been performed third class parliamentary, as third class was then, or else on board a steamboat slowly crawling up the east coast. Now he sat in a cushioned compartment of a mad express, that never drew rein till it got to Guildford, when it only stopped for a minute ere tearing

off again through the tunnel and out again into the wild country lying beyond, as if a thousand demons were skurrying along the metals in pursuit.

They had to leave the main line at last, and avail themselves of a branch which landed passengers within about a mile of Norman's Bay; but when they arrived at their destination the sun still wanted two hours of setting, and the sea lay before them smooth and unruffled, reflecting a thousand exquisite tints from the summer sky, while white-winged vessels made their way slowly down the Channel, seeming to be carrying English sunshine away with them on their sails as they receded from the familiar shore.

'Eh, but it's beautiful,' cried Mr. McCullagh, who, indeed, had enjoyed few holidays, and who consequently brought the keenest zest to the scene stretching before him. 'It's years since I beheld anything to compare to this. Why, it's worth the whole journey if a man went back by the next train.'

Mr. Pousnett was not—so he had explained to his companion as they travelled down—stopping at Norman Castle, which he had temporarily delivered over to that autocrat, the British workman.

'I am having some decent rooms built,' he added, 'and the place made a little habitable. We will go over to-morrow and see how things are getting on; but for to-night, after we have had dinner, I vote we moon on the beach. You can't imagine how I love walking up and down on the sea-shore.'

Mr. McCullagh, however, intimated that he thought he could, adding it was an exercise to which he himself had a particular partiality.

They dined, and then they sauntered out together, sitting for

a long time upon some large stones that lay bedded in the shingle.

Afterwards Mr. McCullagh declared he did not mind confessing 'the grasp o' mind of that man was something fearsome'—it minded him of *one* who is just 'no canny.'

'There is not a question,' said Mr. McCullagh, warming to his subject, 'Pousnett has not studied. You won't catch him tripping, I'll warrant. If he had spent the whole of his life shut close up in a study reading, instead of conducting a big business in the City, he could not be better acquainted with every subject on which ye like to touch. The mass of general information he has at his fingers' ends is inconceivable. Whatever he's talking about ye might think had been his one occupation in existence.'

Seated beside the sea, which came rippling in with a sweet sad murmur, looking at the sun setting in a pomp of golden and purple glory, lingering in the tender summer twilight, and watching a still young moon struggling through a bank of clouds, and at last gazing wistfully down at the calm fair scene revealed by her light, Mr. Pousnett, leaving those general topics, concerning which he really knew very little, though able to converse upon them so well, dropped insensibly into graver talk, and discoursed concerning the vanity of all worldly possessions and worldly triumphs in a manner which astounded Mr. McCullagh beyond measure.

Perhaps the man was really tired,—he said he was; perhaps the hour, the place, the sound of the sea's mournful unrest as the waves fretted nearer and nearer to where they sat, the solemnity of night in that lonely bay, the mighty expanse of water darkling beyond, affected with a terrible

melancholy the heart which for years had thought of nothing, cared for nothing, save temporal success—money he should one day be forced to leave behind him, friends by whom he would be forgotten ere his body was laid in the ground.

Whatever the cause, one thing is certain: no divine could have spoken words more disparaging concerning the goods of this world than did Mr. Pousnett, with Mr. McCullagh for sole audience. Solomon himself, when he was in his lowest spirits, and when remorse for all his foolish wickedness lay heavy on his conscience, could have said no more concerning vanity than did the man who was now managing director of the great business in which he had as senior partner achieved such success.

Either Mr. McCullagh's state of mind and body may have been more healthy, or he had not yet arrived at that period when even the most fortunate man occasionally begins to ask himself, 'Why have I thus slaved and laboured?' 'To what end did I rise up early and so late take rest?' but Mr. Pousnett's dissertation failed to awaken any answering echo in his breast. It only filled him with a strange wonder and a vague discontent. It was so unlike anything he ever expected to hear 'come out of Pousnett's mouth.'

'I am afraid ye don't feel yourself very well,' he said after some time, when the damp sea air, in addition to Mr. Pousnett's depreciation of money, 'even honestly come by,' began to strike a chill to his bones.

'I have not been very well lately,' answered Mr. Pousnett.

'Do ye think it's wise of ye to be sitting on a cold stone by the water?' asked Mr. McCullagh.

'Well, perhaps it is not very

wise,' answered Mr. Pousnett. 'Shall we go further, or return to the hotel?'

Fond of Nature as he might be, Mr. McCullagh thought upon the whole a comfortable chair and a roof over his head and gaslights and a glass of toddy would be preferable to the shingle and the lap-lap of the sea. Accordingly he intimated his belief that for townfolk, who were 'not used to the salt-water,' it was 'not prudent to stay out of doors too long at a time.'

'Ye ought to take more care of yourself, Mr. Pousnett,' he added, noticing that gentleman shiver as they walked homeward along the beach.

'I do take as much care of myself as I can,' answered Mr. Pousnett; and it seemed to his guest, when he remarked shortly after they reached the inn that he thought if Mr. McCullagh would excuse him he would go up to his room, he was only following good advice.

'Never mind me,' observed the Scotchman, feeling that even without Mr. Pousnett enough remained to enable him to pass an hour or two very comfortably. 'I'll do well, I warrant ye. It's yourself I'm thinking of,' he said, 'Mr. Pousnett; do not try to burn the candle at both ends.'

'Capital counsel,' returned Mr. Pousnett; 'I only wish I could follow it.'

'Hoots, man!' cried Mr. McCullagh, with homely friendliness, 'what's money wanting health?'

'What's health wanting money?' amended Mr. Pousnett, laughing.

Next morning, in answer to his guest's anxious inquiries as to how he found himself, Mr. Pousnett relieved Mr. McCullagh's mind by stating he felt very much better.

'I always do,' he added, 'when

I can leave the office even for a short time.'

'Then why don't ye take a good spell right away?' asked Mr. McCullagh.

'Because,' replied Mr. Pousnett, 'I have a notion, which may be very foolish, that they can't do without me there.'

'But there's your son, you know,' suggested Mr. McCullagh.

'And there is yours,' added Mr. Pousnett; 'and there are all the directors, and the manager and bookkeepers and clerks and messengers, and yet—I mention this to show the ridiculous fancies a man may take—I have a notion I am of more use than the whole of them put together.'

'I make no doubt but you are,' agreed Mr. McCullagh, who held precisely the same opinion about himself.

'And that's why I don't go away. If I went I should only be wondering how everything was going on. It was bad enough in the old days, when, after a fashion, I had no one to please or consider save myself; but it is far worse now. The interests of all the shareholders seem hanging over me. Do you know there are times when even with our splendidly prosperous business I feel the strain more than I can bear.'

It did not occur to Mr. McCullagh as strange that the man who found one business too much for him should be thinking of embarking in another. Mr. Pousnett's temperament struck him as one of those which find it impossible to remain still. Forming a company for the due development of Norman's Bay appeared the most natural thing in the world for him to take to in that glorious summer-time which was upon them. Just then, as he explained, while they were wending their way to Norman Castle,

he had a great chance. He could get the new company favourably mentioned in the *Times*. The man who did the money article had by accident been stranded at Norman's Bay, and was so delighted with the place, with the scenery, with the sands, with the bathing, with the roads, with the old castle and the older church, that he asked, 'Why will people go to Brighton? why don't they come here? why has nobody discovered Norman's Bay and converted it into a health resort?' When told Mr. Pousnett, the great Mr. Pousnett of Pousnett & Co. (Limited), intended to 'make' Norman's Bay, he expressed himself delighted, and said he himself would take the very first new house which was built if it fronted the sea and were within his limit.

'So,' finished Mr. Pousnett, 'what I intend to do is knock up a company as soon as possible. I shall only reserve about fifty acres for myself, just enough to keep the house private, and give that end of the esplanade a "tone." Lord Cresham has bought ten acres from me next the present town (and given a fancy price for his purchase too),' added Mr. Pousnett in parenthesis; 'so, one way or another, I think the thing is sure to go. I expect the surveyor and lawyer over to-day from the Isle of Wight, where they both chance to be stopping. I am so glad you are down here, because you will be able to hear their opinion *vis à voce*.'

Mr. McCullagh felt very much obliged, but he could not stop to meet the gentlemen referred to. He must be getting back to town after they had been over Norman Castle.

'That's nonsense,' answered Mr. Pousnett; 'now I have got you I shall keep you. Send a telegraph message to Basinghall-

street that they need not expect you to-day,' which suggestion, meeting all the requirements of the case, was in due time acted upon.

Having, during the course of the previous evening, disburdened his mind concerning the importance of matters relating to the next world, Mr. Pousnett ere long took occasion to declare his sentiments regarding this. He did not shirk the matrimonial question in the least. He talked of his eldest daughter, now Viscountess Cresham, of Captain Crawford, of his second daughter and Mr. Stoddard, to whom she was married, of Miss Vanderton's curate who had taken her off to Herefordshire.

In each case he maintained he had secured the happiness of the parties interested. He spoke most sensibly and with thorough conviction. He was almost confidential in his utterances. He mentioned his daughter's weaknesses and his son's faults; told what trouble he had gone through himself, and, indeed, sent Mr. McCullagh home on the following day with quite a different opinion of the senior partner from any he had ever previously entertained.

'He's just killing himself with work,' said Mr. McCullagh to Mr. Snow. The worthy pair had met in King William-street, and in answer to a remark that he looked as if he had been in the country, the Scotchman observed, in a careless sort of way, he had only been down with Mr. Pousnett to that place of his on the coast.

'Norman's Bay' exclaimed Mr. Snow. 'There is going to be a company formed to make it a second Brighton, isn't there? Do come in to my office; I want to know all about it. A friend of

mine I know will take shares. Everything Pousnett touches is lucky.'

By no means loth to meet with an appreciative listener, Mr. McCullagh acceded to the request, and unburdened himself amongst other items of news of the fact he believed if Pousnett went on at the rate he was doing he wouldn't last many years.

'And that would be a pity; for we have not many such men, and we can't spare one of them,' observed Mr. Snow sympathetically.

'We'll have to spare one if he does not take some rest soon,' answered Mr. McCullagh, mentally reverting to Mr. Pousnett's opinions concerning the worthlessness of earthly success.

'Let us hope he will be warned in time,' said Mr. Snow.

After a little while Mr. McCullagh departed; and then Mr. Snow took up a sheet of paper and wrote these words to Mr. Alty:

'The first forenoon you are passing, please give me a call.'

Next morning Mr. Alty obeyed this summons.

'Anything very good for me?' he asked, putting his ascetic face inside the door.

'Important, at any rate,' returned Mr. Snow. 'Don't stand there. Come in. I sent for you,' he went on, 'to tell you to get off the direction of Pousnetts'. He's beginning to complain of his health, and it does not require a conjurer to know what that means.'

'But why should I get off the direction?' asked Mr. Alty plaintively.

'O, that's just as you please, of course. Only never say hereafter I did not give you a hint in time.'

(To be continued.)

MAIDIE.

CHAPTER I.

A SCOTCH stile with rough pointed handles, like the horns of the altar. Perched upon the said stile, her head thrown back against one of the handles, her white soft dress swathing her in clinging folds, a fair picture was Maidie.

The sky glowed salmon and gold, the river ran down below, trees rustled, cattle left browsing and drew near, scanning Maidie with curious eyes.

But Maidie noted nothing of all this, for truly she had much to think about, and she had come out to that particular place fully determined to think it all out at as great a length as she pleased. A happy afternoon's dreaming had seemed to her a very desirable thing from the moment when the object of those dreams had gone off with the shooters, and now she was enjoying it thoroughly.

Maidie, Jinny, and Cecil Dundas lived, and had lived, nearly as long as they could remember, with their uncle the Admiral.

Uncle Andrew loved them all, but Maidie was the apple of his eye.

Storgheid was uncle Andrew's house; the rushing Storg the river at Maidie's feet.

Maidie was an exquisite being: tall, slight, and fair, with tender dark-gray eyes, and a skin of which the delicate bloom gave one the idea that even a touch would wound her, an indication of feelings and susceptibilities almost too highly strung for this workaday world. Not seldom, indeed, would she bewail the loss of some

pleasure from which she had absented herself through a sort of morbid dread of having her feelings trodden on, and would then fully agree with her sister Guinever (shortened to Jinny in babyhood) when she encouragingly remarked,

'But you know, Maidie, you really are a quite too ridiculous old shrinker!'

Sweet Maidie! All alone with Nature she could dream at her ease, and smile and wonder over this new and delightful incident in her life: that Neile Campbell should have fallen in love with her, instead of with any of the thousand other girls he had met.

'I wonder if he won't find this place very dull! Odd he should like to go with all those uninteresting men, though of course he had to. How handsome he looked last night among all those old fogies! And how he took it out of General Towney at billiards! That pleased me. Conceited old thing! What a splendid head Neile has! O,' looking at her watch, 'I've stayed out too long! They will be back, and Jinny will be home! I wonder how he will like Jinny!'

For Jinny had been away when the conquering hero arrived, and had moreover never seen the said hero; Maidie's little romance having taken place at an old house further north, where she and Captain Neile Campbell had been on a visit, and where, the weather being wild and much companionship unavoidable, and Maidie being charming and Neile impres-

sionable, and what with one thing and another, the usual results followed, and they were engaged; and last night Neile had arrived at Storgheid to make acquaintance with his betrothed's people.

The sun dropped suddenly behind the low hills; the gude-wife from the farm on the other side of the river began to call home her ducks; and Maidie, gathering up her sweeping folds with a deft hand, walked through the grass along the river-path.

Past the first hedge she saw two forms advancing to meet her—one in a shooting-suit of rough gray, the other all in white garments like her own, swinging a large hat in her hand.

Neile and Jinny!

And a gray mist swept up from the river, and the day grew suddenly dim.

CHAPTER II.

MAIDIE awoke the next morning with a feeling of considerable depression upon her—a feeling that did not wear off, but deepened as the days ran by.

Neile had said,

'By Jove, your sister's the most beautiful woman going!'

And Jinny had 'allowed' that there was something very sympathetic about Neile, when Maidie had delicately sounded them as to their opinions of each other.

And their tastes fitted so well!

Maidie, sitting in the old window-seat in the great hall, it might have been a fortnight after Neile's coming, could hear them trying melodies together.

Perhaps it was as well Maidie was in the hall and not in the music-room; for Neile, leaning against the piano, with his dark eyes fixed on Jinny's profile, was putting far too much expression

into his violin-strings, and Jinny seemed rather confused and self-conscious.

'I'm tired of playing,' she said, lifting her radiant eyes to Neile's from under her rippling rasset hair.

Neile had been absorbed in thoughts vague and sweet, and had been translating those meditations into music. This sudden lunge of Jinny's gave him a shock, though he did not show any signs of discomfiture; but merely stroked his dark moustache reflectively, quietly observing:

'O fie! Why add to the mass of falsehood already going in this wicked world? Are you ever tired of playing? Did you ever try *work*? You didn't give that last phrase rightly; let me show you,' and, stooping over her, he played a few notes. Was it for the chance of touching Jinny's straying fingers? The touch was almost too much for him; and Jinny's flush became crimson. He could almost feel the hot glow of her cheek; the brown head and the golden were perilously close.

Jinny sprang up.

'O, don't go!' said Neile. 'I was on the brink of composing the most lovely sonata in fifty thousand parts!'

'Rather lengthy, isn't it?' said Jinny.

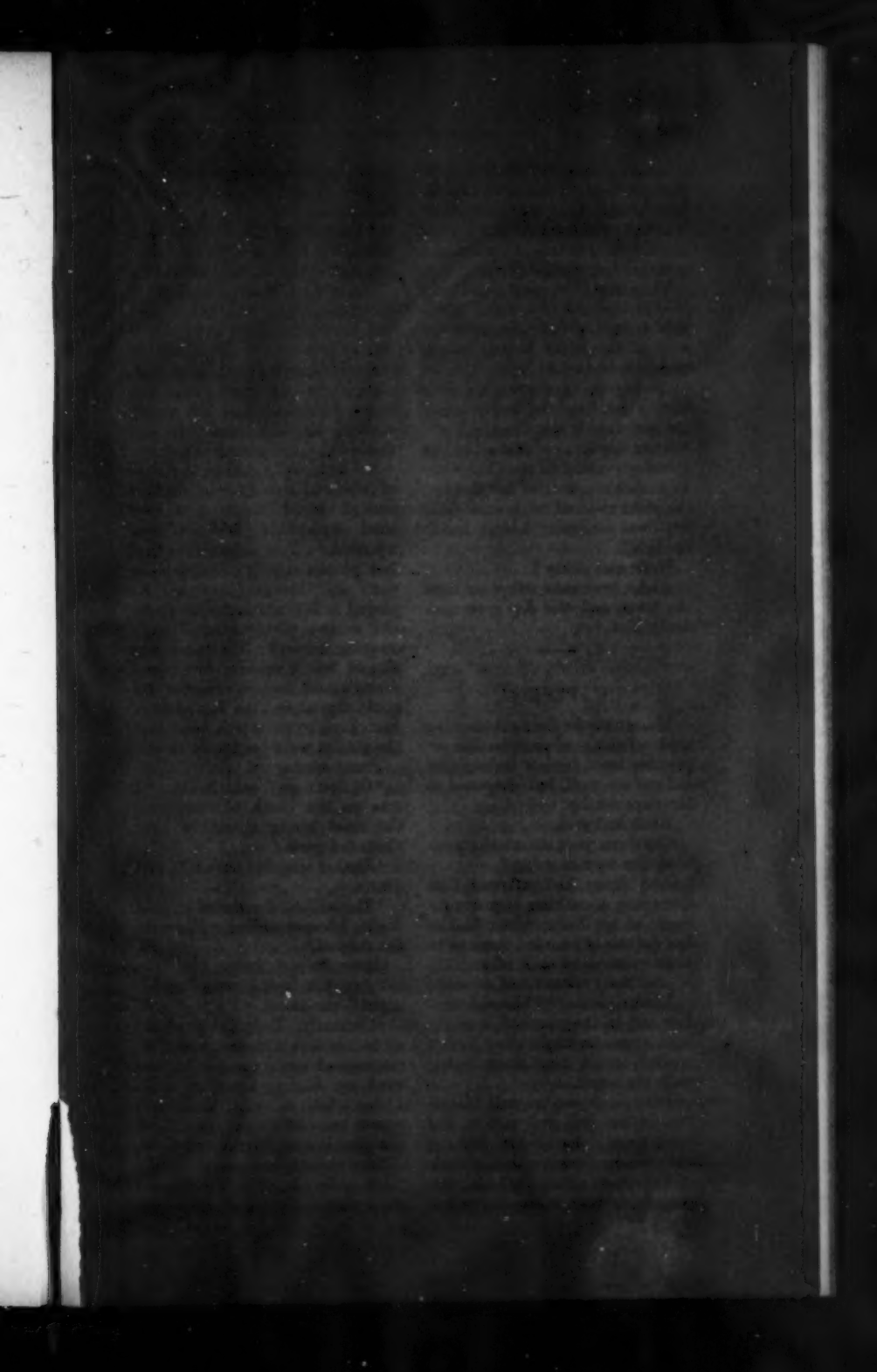
'The subject demanded it,' said Neile; his eyes adding, '*You* were the subject.'

Jinny dropped hers.

'Are you going with us to-night?' she asked.

'Certainly. Lady Towney talked to me like a mother about it; she seemed quite anxious to prevent my finding Deerdale dull. I don't feel it so in the least; rather too exciting, in fact. Do you find it dull, Miss Jinny?'

'Sometimes,' responded Jinnie. 'Try billiards for a distraction, shall we?'





Stanley Mallie (clocked N. 6) and, tearing off his rough jacket, he plunged in.

'Pool,' said Neile; 'and I will let you take all my lives' with pleasure.'

So the day waned, and presently Maidie, coming down-stairs attired in cream satin, with a mass of palest roses on her fair bosom, caught sight of Neile and Jinny standing together, waiting in the hall till the party assembled; and Neile took a flower from Jinny's bouquet, and did *not* put it in his coat, although it disappeared into some inner recess.

'A talisman!' he said.

'Against me?' queried Jinny, raising her eyebrows.

Maidie was paler than ever that night; but Jinny! In a white-lace dress, the only touch of colour a huge cardinal fan, with her radiant violet eyes, her russet gold hair rippling all over her charming little head, her whitest shoulders and superb arms, and over all that indefinable air of a wood-nymph!

'How lovely your sister looks to-night!' said Maidie's old admirer, Frank Murray, in the pause of a waltz. 'I suppose that's the fellow she's engaged to,' he continued; for he had only come over for the dance, and had not heard the story correctly. 'He seems awfully smitten, and no wonder! Lucky man!'

'Lucky man! Lu-uc-ky man!' sighed the orchestra, and then began swaying round in the most absurd fashion.

'I think I'll sit down,' Maidie gasped. 'I feel giddy.'

'Fearfully hot,' sympathised Frank. 'Ventilation conspicuous by its absence. Come into the conservatory, it's better there.'

So Maidie went with him, a mist before her eyes, a buzzing in her ears, and the band playing softly in waltz time, 'Lucky man! Lu-uc-ky man!'

Out of the mist a picture took

form—Jinny sitting against dark shining leaves, the soft glow from a Japanese lantern lighting her gleaming eyes, and falling like sunset over her shadowy dress. Close by, Neile lounging with long lithe limbs against a pillar; while, like an angry cloud, hovered between them Jinny's cardinal fan, of which Neile had possessed himself, and was making it do duty for both.

CHAPTER III.

RESTLESSLY turning, weary with thinking, unable to stay the iteration, 'Lucky man! Lu-uc-ky man!' in her ears, Maidie's feverish night merged into morning.

'It's absurd! After all, why do I worry myself! He danced a good deal with her; but that's nothing, coming from the same house, and my sister. Jinny, I know, is irresistible to most people. I should be jealous if it were any one except Neile; but I feel sure of him!'

Did she?

'And Jinny, she always flirts with every one; but she means nothing by it. Nothing! Yet—O, I cannot bear it! If—if—but only yesterday Neile was talking to uncle Andrew about our wedding. O, I wish I could sleep, if only for a couple of hours. I *shall* look a fright!'

A 'fright' she did not look, but pale and fragile as a wood flower after a storm.

At the late breakfast next day, 'Maidie's wearied,' said aunt Margot. 'You made her dance too much, Neile!'

Good soul, she had not been to the ball!

There was a moment's silence. Maidie's heart thumped; Jinny blushed; Neile looked up from

his plate, a rather conscious expression in his eye.

'You mean Mr. Francis Murray,' he said. 'Maidie quite cut me. I saw them, but when I went to look for her she was gone; they were both gone!'

'We were in the conservatory,' said Maidie; and having said it, she could not resist glancing from Neile to Jinny, who returned the glance uneasily.

Neile looked at Maidie, and noticed how wan she was; it did not strike him to connect her dejected appearance with himself.

Accustomed to improve the shining hour in any way that took his fancy, he did not apprehend danger, and forgot the riskiness of playing with fire. No doubt if he had thought on the subject at all, he would have considered himself quite exemplary in the character of an engaged man, and would cheerfully have fought anybody who presumed to differ from his opinion. Perhaps some slight wave of compunction did pass over his inner consciousness; but Jinny happening to rise at that moment, he was constrained to watch her graceful movement, and if there were dim warnings they were routed on the spot.

'What shall we do to-day?' he asked, as they strolled into the old hall.

'Well, I don't mind confessing I'm awfully done up,' said Jinny. 'I haven't a toe left; so I shall take a delightful nap after lunch.'

Here Cecil, her brother, appeared.

'I have a message to thee, O Captain!' he exclaimed.

'Yea; what may your message be?' asked Neile.

'Uncle Andrew sent me in to tell you that the water serves, and that we're going to have a "leistering" to-night,' said Cecil.

'Then we'll all assist,' said Jinny; 'it's the first this season.'

'The first! then we may all wish wishes!' cried Maidie, who was recovering her spirits, and inclining to deride her nightmares of the last twelve hours.

'Bide at hame, maids! bide at hame!' said Cecil, who was a boy of domineering disposition. He and Jinny had pitched battles, on an average, five times a day. 'There's no room in the trows' ('trows' being two flat-bottomed boats fastened together) 'for such kittle cattle.'

'Then you'll have to stay out,' retorted Jinny.

'Tuts!' said Cecil, 'girls always faint, poking their noses where they're not wanted.'

'Sing, "Booh, to you!
Pooh-pooh, to you!"'

chanted Jinny, making for the broad staircase. Cecil flew after her.

'Sing, "Bah, to you!
Ha, ha, to you!"'

came down the stairs, followed by the banging of a door; and Cecil, balked of his victim, returned panting.

The old house was very still in the quiet of the long afternoon, as Maidie came down from her nap, refreshed and comforted.

As she crossed the hall the pale October sunshine streamed in and lighted on one of the family portraits hanging above the deep fireplace. She stood a moment regarding it, resting one foot on the low stone that ran round the hearth. A subdued clicking came from the billiard-room; and immediately after, from the music-room close at hand, stole the low wail of a violin, beginning the exquisite duet in the garden-scene of *Faust*.

Low, tender, and sweet, Maidie

listened entranced, as it rose in cadences ever more passionate, until—silence!—was that a sob?

Maidie walked in at the open door, her light step unheard on the thick carpet, her form hidden by a mass of tall plants that served as a screen, and saw—Jinny held fast in Neile's arms, her lips parted, a scarlet flush on her lovely cheek!

Their gleaming eyes looked deep into each other's depths; the next instant Neile gave Jinny one long fierce kiss that seemed to absorb her very soul.

'O Neile, O Neile!' panted Jinny, 'what, what will Maidie say?'

'Darling, darling!' sighed Neile, 'I never thought I should love any one as I do you!' kissing her hair. 'Maidie will forgive us; she would not make us all unhappy. I don't think she cares much for things. It will be all right—in time.'

Maidie stood dazed; then crept out to fly across the hall, up the stairs, into her room, bolt the door, and weep, weep, weep!

'O God in heaven! God in heaven!' she sobbed. 'I don't care much! Don't care much!'

The afternoon wore on. Maidie lay on her bed weeping, weeping. Her maid knocked. Would she have some tea? No, she would not. She would not go down to dinner.

Later Jinny knocked at her door, and called:

'We are going out to the "leistering." Do come if you can, Maidie!'

She answered nothing; but presently, when they were gathering on the river's bank among the rugged Highlanders, shouting and waving their torches, Maidie stood wrapped in a heavy plaid, with her hat pulled down over her brows, shielding herself from the flickering light.

'That's right!' exclaimed her old uncle. 'Glad you're better, my pet! Now, then, in with you; push off now, Sandy;' and into the trows they got, and drifted out into the stream.

Neile and the Admiral were standing, spear in hand, waiting for the moment when the unlucky fish, attracted by the torches, should rise to meet their fate.

Maidie and Jinny were crouching near, unheeded in the general excitement. They had not long to wait.

'Haud ye'r licht lower, Jamie mon!'

The river was running strong, and soon in the circle of yellow light round the trows the doomed fish were swarming, and the cruel game began, the men striking in every direction.

Maidie rose and stood near her uncle.

'Sandy, ye blethering idiot, stand out of Miss Maidie's way! Now, darling! Hullo, there's a fine fellow! Heuch! Have at him!' he lunged forward, the boat swayed. Maidie was gone!

'God! Where's Maidie!' he shouted.

Jinny screamed, and hid her eyes in her shawl.

'Maidie! Maidie!' shrieked Neile; and, tearing off his rough jacket, he plunged in.

A few brief minutes of confusion, shouting, hoping.

'He canna find her!' said one of the rough men, looking beyond the circle of light, shading his eyes with his hand.

'I doot the lassie's a'ready's far's the island.'

Was it chance, or was it design? Who can say now?

Maidie was gone.

The following day, when they found her body, the pale still lips opened not, either to accuse or to justify.

A FOND FATHER'S FOLLY.

A BABY-BLEST Brewer there was,
Who once, in a moment of pride, did
What he lived to wish undone, because
He disliked being 'chaffed' and derided.

He always had plenty of cash,
And more than he knew what to do with,
But had seldom done anything rash,
Or begun what he couldn't go through with.

Yet when you've proceeded as far
As verse the thirteenth, you'll begin to
Perceive what a startling *faux pas*
His becoming a pa led him into.

For nothing he'd done in his life,
And nothing that ever was done to him,
Gave him half as much joy as his wife
Occasioned by bearing a son to him.

And his friends were all filled with surprise,
For they never had seen him so silly as,
At times, he appeared in the guise
Of a newly-made paterfamilias.

When his infant was just a year old,
A farthing, so new, bright, and red,
That it might have been taken for gold,
He took from his pocket, and said,

'This coin of the smallest amount I
This day to my offspring will give,
And I promise to double my bounty
Each birthday as long as I live!'

So, on birthday the second he gave him
A halfpenny—true to his word—
And, in like manner, took care to save him
A new penny-piece for the third.

His donation the following year
Was twopence; and, if you think fit
To reckon again, 'twill be clear
That the next was a fourpenny-bit.

Then eightpence, and then one-and-four,
And then two-and-eightpence, and so on ;
For I fear you will find it a bore
If with too many figures I go on.

In fact, it would hardly be worse if I,
Forgetting the proper vocation
Of a rhymester, attempted to versify
The table of multiplication.

So from *eight* years to *sixteen* we'll skip,
And you'll start with surprise when I state
That our friend's anniversary 'tip'
Came to thirty-four pounds two-and-eight.

Then 'twas suddenly brought to his mind,
By a friend who stayed with him to sup,
That many more years of this kind
Of 'doubling' would *double him up*.

And astonished was he, and dismayed,
When he found that (still doubling it yearly)
His gift in another decade
Would be thirty-five thousand pounds nearly !

At the *thirtieth* year would be due
Five hundred and fifty-nine thousand
(A handsomer annual 'screw'
Than *kings* have with sweat on their brows earned) ;

At *forty* his son should receive
Five hundred and seventy-two millions ;
And (hard though it is to believe)
After *fifty* he'd come into *billions* !

Now pause till, by counting, you've cracked
The nut, and you'll find it no sham un,
But a hard arithmetical fact,
Without a suspicion of 'gammon.'

And when you have worked out the test,
And verified all I have told,
You'll be ready to credit the rest
Of the wonders I have to unfold.

So this fond foolish father lived on—
Hale and stout, as a brewer of porter
Should be—till the age of his son
Was *sixty-four* years and a *quarter*.

But 'twere almost as easy to stuff
A ladder inside a portmanteau,
As to find in my lines room enough
To display what the mighty debt ran to.

Yet although I'm unable to squeeze
 The figures in here, they'll turn up
 When you come to the end, if you please,
 Like the dregs left behind in a cup.

Meanwhile it may do just as well,
 If, in fancy, I pile the amount up
 In a mountain of sovereigns, and tell
 How long they would take you to count up.

Amazed more and more, then, you'll be
 When I say it can clearly be proved,
 (Or, as Euclid remarks, Q.E.D.
 In the book by all schoolboys beloved),

That, counting all day and all night,
 On Sundays and working-days too,
 You in *two million centuries* might
 Just manage the task to get through.

Or suppose they were joined each to each
 In a chain (your incredulous smiles
 Notwithstanding), the sovereigns would reach
Many thousands of millions of miles!

Nearly *six thousand millions of tons*
Of five-pound bank-notes it would take
 (At least, so my reckoning runs)
 The payment in paper to make.

And, unless your inventiveness flags,
 You can picture them through the streets borne
 On the shoulders of porters in bags,
 Or in wagons, 'per Chaplin & Horne.'

And it's no less a matter of fact,
 If the notes were united with care,
 All the mountains on earth might be packed
 In the paper, with plenty to spare.

Thus it was that our brewer became
 A butt for the banter and 'chaffing'
 Of his friends, who ne'er mentioned his name
 Without shrugging their shoulders and laughing.

And daily in mischief they plied him
 With puzzles like those you've just read;
 And nightly his sleep was denied him
 Through working long sums in his head.

Yet he ne'er grew impatient or surly,
 And seldom was heard to complain,
 Though I wonder he didn't die early
 Of *£ s. and d.* on the brain.

But had he not lasted so long,
And made such a fuss with his baby,
None had known what a subject for song
A piece of arithmetic may be.

And, departing, he said with a sigh
To his son, as he bade him 'Adieu,'
'For the vast sums I owe you, O, I
Can but leave you this poor "I O U."'

So he died; and you quite understand
That *short metre* compels me to put
The amount of his great note of hand
By itself in a note at the foot.* c. c.

* 19,215,958,410,079,163*l.* 14*s.* 8*d.* This represents the amounts for all the years, from the twenty-sixth to the sixty-fourth inclusive, added together. (He had paid cash for twenty-five years.) His son forgave him the interest.

MR. GRAHAM'S MANIA.

My friend Jack Graham of the F. O. is a very good fellow ; but, as I have often told him, he would be a better fellow still if he was not so dreadfully matter-of-fact. I have spoken very seriously about this defect to him over and over again ; but it does not seem to be of any use. I suppose it is the nature of the man, engrained in his Caledonian blood.

'I can't help being Scottish, you know, Norfolk,' he sometimes says meekly.

He calls me 'Norfolk' because my name is Howard. It is not his own idea. He is not the sort of man to dream of anything approaching to a joke. But hearing others apply the names *Norfolk* and *Cimex* to me, he has fallen into the way of doing so himself. I have occasionally indulged in the fancy that when Jack uses a nickname, he experiences a sort of inward feeling which is the germ of what would be, if fully developed, a sense of humour. But this is only a fancy on my part, and perhaps I am biassed in his favour, being a friend of several years' standing.

We first chummed at Trinity, where our tastes and pursuits were as different as could be. He was as steady as old Time. I wasn't. He was a Wrangler. I wasn't. I was proctorised occasionally. He wasn't. But with all these shortcomings on his part, he was really a very good fellow ; and I have always taken a fatherly interest in him. If he were only not so brutally respectable, perhaps we might get on better still.

I was very angry with Jack once. It was about three years ago ; and this is how it happened.

He had an uncle, from whom I gathered that he had expectations. I was not particularly interested in the old gentleman from Jack's remarks about him. As far as I could make out, he must have been a dry old book-collector and connoisseur of pictures, an archæologist, and, above all, a genealogist. None of his tastes were in the least in *my* line ; nor had I the slightest desire to make his acquaintance.

By the way, Jack himself knew a deal too much about pedigrees and such things to be agreeable. I often had to shy a book at his head at Cambridge, because he *would* go prying on about family histories and the Graham clan, and the family legends, &c., things I didn't care twopence about. I remember once being rash enough to say to him,

'I suppose, then, Jack, if about fifty thousand Grahams could be quickly disposed of, you'd be Duke of Montrose ?'

'My dear fellow,' he replied, in a very serious tone, 'I can't get you to understand that *we* belong to the *elder* branch. Don't you see, Sir Patrick, in the reign of Robert II., had four sons by his second marriage, and—'

'Confound Sir Patrick !' I shouted. 'What's the good of bringing all that up again ! Hang it, Jack, we all go up to Noah, and there we stop !'

'The *Grahams*,' replied Jack solemnly, 'are descended from Adam.'

The Scotch are too fond of pedigrees. Old Mr. Graham was probably, I thought, far worse in this respect than his nephew; and I confess I had no desire to incur the risk of hearing the history of all the Grahams from his dry old lips.

My friendship with Jack was therefore very severely put to the test, when he came to my chambers one day, and said,

'Cimex, I wonder if you'd do me a sort of a kind of a little favour?'

'Name it, Jack.'

'Well, look here, old man. My uncle wants me to run down and spend the evening with him to-morrow, as I often do; and the fact is, there's a pressure of work just now at the Office, owing to this new move of old Bismarck's. Of course I could get away if I really wanted to; but I don't think I ought. The chief's such a good fellow, it would be a shame to run away.'

'Well, Jack, and you want me to—'

'To go and dine with my uncle, if you don't mind, Norfolk. I'm afraid it will bore you rather; but the old fellow is very fond of showing off his pictures and things to strangers. So if you *could* conjure up some interest in such subjects, and wouldn't mind his prosing away for an hour or two, I should be so much obliged.'

'My dear Jack,' I replied, 'I would do even more than that for you. For your sake, and as a testimony to the great regard I have for you, I will condescend to go so far as to partake of the first-rate dinner which I understand that Mr. Graham is in the habit of spreading before his guests. And if his wines are as good as I expect they will be, he shall go bang through the Graham pedigree if he likes, provided he

doesn't expect me to understand it.'

'Thank you, Sim' (an endearing abbreviation of *Cimex*); 'it's very good of you, and will set my mind quite at rest. Don't be afraid of my uncle, though I can't deny that he has a mania for genealogy. You see, his own marriage was peculiar, and made his connections rather complicated: His father-in-law—'

'O, bother his father-in-law!' I said. 'He'll tell me all about it himself, I daresay.'

'Yes, very likely he will; only you know, Norfolk, I thought I'd prepare you.'

'Declined, with thanks, Jack. I'll have it all in one dose, old boy.'

'Then I'll drop him a line to say you are coming in my stead, Sim. He'll be more pleased, I believe, than if I were to go myself. He's so proud of showing his library and his pictures. You *do* like pictures, Sim?'

'Well, yes, I like *some* pictures,' I replied.

'I'll tell him so,' Jack said; 'that will make you more welcome.'

Accordingly, on the afternoon of the next day I found myself going down to Marlow, where Mr. Graham had a really 'desirable mansion' on the banks of the river. In the train I tried to remember all that Jack had told me at different times about the old gentleman; but found that, if suddenly called upon to write his biography, I could scarcely have written six lines.

'—Graham, Esq.,' the memoir might have run, 'was born about the end of the eighteenth century. In his old age he was a widower, without children, living on the banks of the Thames, near Marlow. He had a large collection of books and pictures, and was very fond of genealogy.'

That was about all I knew.

I found the old gentleman in his library. He was tall and thin, stooping with age, but cheerful, and only too communicative.

'Very glad to see you; very glad indeed, Mr. Howard,' he said, shaking hands. 'I am always glad to see any of John's friends. They must have something good about them, I always think, if John likes them. A very good steady young man is John, and he'll do well. They think highly of him at the Office. His lordship, I happen to know, has got his eye upon him. I only hope he won't make a fool of himself by marrying too early.'

Mr. Graham sighed as he said this, and seemed troubled at some thought which crossed his mind. I endeavoured to change the subject, which was slightly embarrassing to myself, inasmuch as Jack was evidently smitten, though few knew it as yet, by the charms of my eldest niece, Mary Skelton, who was more like a sister to me than a niece, being only seven years my junior. An engagement of which his rich uncle did not approve might be a serious thing to Jack, so I plunged into other topics. Presently, however, my host started one of his hobbies.

'Pray, Mr. Howard,' he said, with great suavity, 'may I ask whether you are one of the *Norfolk Howards*?'

Was the old gentleman chaffing me? I looked up at him, but saw in his countenance no reason for supposing such a thing.

'I—really, sir, I don't know much about my father's family. His father was a clergyman somewhere in Worcestershire, I think; but I'm not at all clear about our pedigree.'

It was evident that Mr. Graham had a poorer opinion of me after this.

'H'm!' he ejaculated; 'I expect, if you belonged to the Norfolk branch, or to the Howards of Effingham, you would know about it. But perhaps you are one of those Radical fellows who "smile at the claims of long descent"!'

'Well, Mr. Graham, to tell you the truth, I don't care much what my descent may have been.'

He frowned, and I was afraid I had forfeited his good opinion altogether. But what had I done? I had only spoken the truth. I was beginning to regret that I had been so self-denying to Jack as to take his place.

'I hear from my nephew that you like pictures, Mr. Howard,' said Jack's uncle, after a pause. 'Shall we take a turn in the picture-gallery before dinner? There is a very good light just now.'

Accordingly he led the way to a long corridor, whose walls were covered with pictures. I saw at once, to my disappointment, that the pictures were by no means of the class I cared for, being chiefly portraits of ladies and gentlemen who had lived and died long before the nineteenth century had begun. I resigned myself to the peripatetic lecture on the Graham family which I expected, mentally deciding, however, that there were limits even to my powers of self-sacrifice for Jack's sake.

But Mr. Graham, it appeared, did not deem me worthy to be a recipient of the treasures of family history which he would doubtless have let loose on more intelligent and sympathising ears. He simply played the part of showman, stating names and dates, and here and there some military exploit or political event.

At last we came to a portrait which rather took my fancy. It was a handsome face, but terribly disfigured by the tremendous wig which betokened the time of

James II. In the corner I read the date, 1687.

'That,' said Mr. Graham calmly, is my father-in-law, Sir Duncan Kennedy. John will have told you about him.'

His *father-in-law*! What could the old gentleman mean? I remembered that Jack had been on the point of telling me about Mr. Graham's father-in-law, and I had stopped him, because I had not wished to be bored by the same uninteresting story twice over. But here was the old gentleman, still under eighty, as I had understood from my friend, talking of a man who had presumably been born in the middle of the seventeenth century as his father-in-law! What could it mean?

It flashed across me that Mr. Graham was a *monomaniac*! He had gone mad on the subject of family history. All at once came surging up into my mind several little expressions which Jack had dropped at different times about his uncle, and which confirmed this theory. Jack had spoken of his 'mania,' but I had regarded this as a mere figure of speech, forgetful that my very literal friend was not given to 'figures of speech;' though, to be sure, another 'figure of speech' of Jack's also occurred to me. He had said that his uncle 'lived in the past.' He does 'live in the past' with a vengeance, I thought, if he thinks his father-in-law lived in the Caroline times!

'John will have told you about him,' were the words which the old man had last spoken. In my agitation I muttered something which he must have taken for assent, for he said no more on the subject, and began talking about other portraits.

I put in 'Yes,' 'Indeed!' &c., instinctively when addressed by

him, but I was really occupied by the thought that my companion was actually *non compos mentis*, and I was extremely angry with Jack for not having prepared me for this, and, in fact, for having subjected me to this kind of thing at all.

If I had had any lingering doubts as to Mr. Graham's sanity, they would have been entirely dispelled, and his insanity perfectly established in my mind, by the remarks he made presently concerning two other portraits.

'That,' he said, pointing to a young cavalier, 'is *my brother-in-law*, Sir Edward Ingram, who fought at Edgehill, you know, in 1642. He was only eighteen then.'

I looked fixedly at the portrait, pretending to be deeply interested, as though I had heard all about Sir Edward from Jack. But, after a rapid calculation, I said to myself, 'Yes, your brother-in-law, as you call him, would have been only 257 if he were living now, my poor friend. I fear it is a case for the Commissioners in Lunacy.'

'And that,' added Mr. Graham, referring to another portrait, 'is my nephew, Lord Crediton. He was born in the same week as the battle of Ramillies. Rather unusual, isn't it, to have a nephew ninety-one years older than yourself?'

This was very sad. After this one might expect anything. I set myself to humour the poor old man, and to appear to listen most attentively to everything he said, and to laugh at anything intended for a joke. But it was dismal work, and my mind was engaged all the time by two different questions: first, what I should do if the old gentleman became violent; and secondly, what I should say to Jack, who had behaved so unhandsomely by me.

I never enjoyed a good dinner

less in my life than the excellent dishes which appeared that evening. We dined *tête-à-tête*, and by superhuman efforts I contrived to get through the meal somehow, not attending in the least to the sumptuous viands of which I partook, nor to the very choice claret which under other circumstances I could not have failed to appreciate. I *hoped* that Mr. Graham's mania was not considered dangerous; for otherwise, as I argued to myself, surely a keeper would be present. But still the horrible thought occurred to me, 'In his state of mind a dangerous phase may come on at any moment;' and I wished there were not so many knives on the table.

We were by no means silent, for Mr. Graham started several topics of conversation, such as the weather, the harvest prospects, the Eastern Question, the Premier's removal to the House of Lords, &c. I answered mechanically, and tried to look as if I thought every remark my companion made very striking. In point of fact he did not now talk any nonsense. But for the breaking out of the mania in the picture-gallery I should not have known that he was insane. Having, however, witnessed that mania, I was, of course, now only anxious to avoid giving him offence until I could decently take my leave. And meantime my observations and replies were so meagre and childish that I caught myself thinking more than once, 'If he were not a maniac himself, what a fool he would think me!'

I had not ventured to say anything to any of the men-servants on the subject of their master's mania. No doubt they imagined that I knew all about it, and was quite prepared. 'What a fool I was,' I thought, 'not to listen to Jack! He would have told me,

perhaps, about the mania; but no, he could never have expected me to come here if I had known. Depend upon it, he trusted to my not finding out. Perhaps the mania only appears rarely.' And a cold perspiration came all over me as I wondered whether the mania might not take a violent shape before my departure.

At length this terrible ordeal came to an end, and I tremblingly wished my unfortunate host good-night and took my leave. When once out of his house I felt as if I were making my escape from a lunatic asylum; and, without considering whether there was any need of so doing, I positively ran all the way to the station. Nor did I feel quite comfortable until I was in the train and speeding towards Paddington.

'It's too bad of Jack,' I thought, as I sat in the railway-carriage. 'I shall have to give him a piece of my mind about this. It's beyond a joke. Perhaps it is a Scotchman's idea of a joke! But Jack has never done such a thing before. Can it be possible that he has never found it out himself? No, that's impossible. He *must* know about it. By the way, I hope there isn't madness in the family. I shall have to inquire about this, and speak to my sister if I find there's any chance of Jack himself going off his head like his poor uncle. Mary sha'n't be sacrificed if I can save her; and she shall be warned in good time, so that she mayn't lose her heart to Jack. Poor fellow! I daresay it's a great grief to him. But still, he ought to have told me; and I think it's uncommonly low form to have subjected me to what I have gone through to-night.'

Such were my reflections until the train arrived at Paddington, whence I immediately proceeded

in a hansom to Jack's lodgings, 'to have it out with him.' I found him alone.

'Well, Norfolk,' he said quite calmly, 'how did you get on? I hope the old fellow didn't bore you?'

'Really, Graham,' I replied, with some indignation, 'I think you needn't have treated me so thoughtlessly. You might have considered what you were doing when you asked me to spend the evening with a—'

'With a what?' he asked, raising his eyebrows.

'Well, if you must have it, with a maniac.'

'My dear fellow, what do you mean?'

'Now, Graham,' I replied rather savagely, 'don't make matters worse. If it's *your* idea of a joke to expose a man to the aberrations of a lunatic, it isn't mine.'

'Lunatic?' he exclaimed; 'what does the man mean? Has my uncle's wine been too much for you, Cimex?'

'Graham, do be serious, please. Either you knew your uncle was mad, or else you didn't. If the former, I consider it most unfriendly in you to have left me to find it out; if the latter, why, I'm very sorry for you, that's all I can say.'

'Upon my word, Howard,' he answered, and I could see that he was quite serious, 'I never knew that my uncle was not as sane as I am myself. What on earth has he done or said to make you think otherwise?'

'O, he hasn't *done* anything; but he *said*, three times over, things which would qualify him for Colney Hatch immediately if the Commissioners had heard him.'

'Good gracious, Howard, what is it? What did he say?'

'Well, first he said that a man

who was grown up in James II.'s time was his father-in-law!'

I paused, to see what effect this would have upon Jack. To my surprise, he merely smiled, and asked,

'What next?'

'Next he said that his brother-in-law—your uncle's own brother-in-law, you understand—fought at the battle of Edgehill in 1642?'

'All right,' said imperturbable Jack; 'what's the third count?'

'The third count is that the poor old gentleman talked about a nephew of his—not you, Jack, but another nephew—a nobleman, who I fancy must be dead by now, seeing that he was ninety-one years older than his uncle?'

'Is that all?' asked Jack, still unmoved.

'What else would you have?'

'But is that all? Are you sure there's nothing else?'

'Really, Jack, old man, I didn't listen to anything else. I thought those three things were—well, *stumpers*. I didn't hear anything else of the same sort, I confess.'

'And you think from those three things that my uncle is *non compos*, eh, Sim? *mad*, eh?'

'As mad as a hatter or a March hare, I should say,' was my reply.

'I'm very sorry for you, Jack; but I don't see what explanation can possibly be given. It can hardly have been a joke, surely?'

'No, it wasn't a joke,' said Jack.

'Then I'm afraid there is no escape from my conclusion; and I'm very sorry for you and your family, old man. By the way, I hope it isn't hereditary, Jack?'

'Hope what isn't hereditary?'

'Madness, mania, monomania, or whatever it ought to be called.'

Jack's colour rose visibly as he replied hurriedly,

'Enough of this, Norfolk; my uncle is no more mad than you

are, and there are no symptoms whatever of insanity in my family.'

'Then how on earth, may I ask, do you account for the very singular—h'm!—*anachronisms* into which he fell, and to which I am ready to testify on oath?'

'My dear fellow,' he replied, 'it's entirely your own fault, if you have been made uncomfortable by anything you have heard. Remember, I was going to tell you all about it myself, only you were too impatient to listen to me.'

'Confound it all, Jack,' said I, for I was feeling very impatient again at the nonchalance with which he treated the matter, 'don't humbug a fellow, but just let me know at once, will you, what on earth your uncle meant by those extraordinary statements?'

'He meant nothing but the truth.'

'The truth?' I echoed. 'What! that he had a brother-in-law born in the reign of *James the First*? not *George the First*, mind: that would be bad enough; but *James the First*!'

'Yes, it's true,' said Jack simply.

I sank back in my chair. Had Jack gone mad too? What a dreadful thing!

'At least,' he continued, 'what is your definition of a brother-in-law?'

'Wife's brother, or sister's husband,' I replied.

'But you'll admit also wife's sister's husband, won't you? In fact, if a man has two sons-in-law, they are loosely spoken of as brothers-in-law to each other, you understand.'

'O yes, I'll give you that in. I don't see that it'll make much difference.'

'Well, if you admit that, it is quite true that my uncle's brother-in-law was born in 1624.'

'I don't believe it,' I exclaimed; 'it's simply impossible.'

'It can't be impossible, Norfolk,' said Jack, in his matter-of-fact tone, 'because it's true. Look at this, I have the whole thing written down here;' and he went to a drawer and took out a note-book. 'It is rather a curious history,' he added; 'but you wouldn't let me tell you when I was going to.'

'Well, I'm sure I've been punished enough for that,' I replied; 'if you can explain these mysteries, I shall be very glad to believe in your uncle's sanity.' But I felt very sceptical.

'Well, shall I begin at the end and work backwards, or at the beginning and work up to the present time? It's all the same to me.'

'"Begin at the beginning,"' I answered, quoting a favourite author, "and go straight on till you come to the end: then stop."

'All right; then here goes! Edward, third son and fifth child of Matthew Ingram, and Eleanor, his wife, only daughter and heiress of—'

'O, bother all that, Jack! Just come to the point, and miss out everything else.'

'Very well, then. Edward Ingram, afterwards knighted by Charles II., was born in 1624, and died in 1703. A few months before his death, at the age of seventy-eight, he married Elizabeth Kennedy, a young girl of seventeen. Do you follow, Norfolk?'

'Yes, I'm all attention. Miss Kennedy must have been born in 1686?'

'She was. Her father, Sir Duncan Kennedy, had married very young. He was born in 1665, and in his old age he married again, and had more children. His youngest child, Ger-

trude Kennedy, born in 1739, was my aunt.'

'Impossible!'

'Fact, though. I can't tell you all the circumstances, but the bare fact is this, that in 1816, she, being seventy-seven, was married in Scotland to my uncle, whom you saw to-day, and who was then only nineteen. I have never been able to make out how he could do such a thing; but I fear her property was an attraction.'

'How old was her father when she was born?'

'Let me see, he must have been seventy-four in that year. O, don't think that impossible, Sim. Don't you know Campbell the poet was seventy-five years younger than his father, who was also seventy-five years younger than *his* father?'

'Well, it *is* a curious combination of odd marriages, I confess. And, after all, there's nothing which may not have happened. Nobody as old as eighty seems to have come into it. But who would have thought of such a thing?'

'Yes, it is unusual,' was Jack's calm remark.

'And the nephew? I asked; 'who was he? Lord somebody.'

'Lord Crediton. He was the son of Lady Ingram by her second marriage. Old Sir Edward died in 1703, only two or three months after his ridiculous marriage, and two years afterwards the young widow married Lord Crediton. Their son and heir was born in 1706, ninety-one years before my uncle was born, who was certainly his uncle by marriage.'

'Well, all I can say, Jack, is, that you ought always to explain

these things beforehand, or it'll be no wonder if people put your uncle down for a lunatic.'

'I hope *your* conduct wasn't very peculiar, Cimet; I'm rather afraid my uncle must be thinking *you* a lunatic all this time. I must set him right about that. You see, he evidently took it for granted that I had told you all about the family history.'

A few days afterwards Jack informed me that he had 'made it all right' with his uncle; but I could never induce him to tell me what the old man had thought of my strange behaviour at his hospitable table. I conjectured, from the ghost of a twinkle in Jack's eye, that the two Grahams, uncle and nephew, had indulged in some grim attempts at laughter at my expense.

But on future occasions I found old Mr. Graham a very entertaining host, and thoroughly enjoyed the dinners I had in his house. I did not care to allude to the affair of the portraits, nor did he, with his fine old-fashioned courtesy, ever cause me any more uneasiness on the subject.

The good old man died last year and left most of his property to Jack, who married my niece, Mary Skelton, a few months ago. It was only last week that a lady remarked to me that I looked very young—being, in fact, still under thirty—to have a married niece, upon which I replied loftily, to her great astonishment,

'O, that's nothing! Another uncle of hers (by marriage) had a brother-in-law—in the same generation as myself, you understand—who was born in the reign of James the First!'

SILKSPINNERS.

A Chapter on *Pébrine* and its Victims.

ONE of the most celebrated and popular members of our English aristocracy—Milord Dundreary—was under the impression that cucumbers grew in slices. It would be doubtless rather an exaggeration to assert that people as a rule imagine silk dresses grow in lengths. Still I fear that even in these days of art-culture, of ladies' colleges and women's rights, of æsthetics and Board schools, many a fair admirer—ay, and wearer too—of 'silk attire' has a most vague idea as to whether the basis of the fabric—the silk itself—be of animal or vegetable production.

Although my readers doubtless possess a good knowledge of the manners and customs of the silk-worm, there may be yet some to whom the title and subject of this sketch is 'an unknown quantity.' I will therefore venture to explain that *pébrine*, or *pébrina*, is neither more nor less than the name of a disease which for several years has grievously afflicted the industrious little silkspinners. It arose from unknown causes, and is up to the present time incurable when a worm is once attacked. *Pébrine* presents symptoms of atrophy, and, like typhus, is accompanied by blackish spots, especially on the feet. These spots are often only visible when examined through a microscope. Worms in an advanced stage of the disease are speckled all over with them as if they had been dredged with pepper; and this peculiarity of the appearance of the spots has enabled a French

entomologist, M. Quatrefage, to add another word to the synonymy of the *pébrine*, without, be it said, bringing the slightest light to bear upon the origin of the malady. It has, however, been accepted, and the disease is now but rarely called by any other name than *pébrine*, which in the *patois* of the south of France signifies 'pepper.'

The course of the disease is not rapid. The worm '*pébriné*' droops and gradually dies. Its agony is quiet, but long.

Some worms resist from three to four days. Once dead, the worms destroyed by this disease, instead of becoming decomposed, harden more and more until they are quite mummified, having the appearance of worms suffering from another disease called '*muscardine*,' which have not been overspread with the characteristic efflorescence of the latter malady.

These two diseases have been thus confounded, although when examined through a microscope the worm '*pébriné*' does not present the filaceous appearance of those attacked by the *muscardine*. Silkworms suffering from the *pébrine* have been known to spin cocoons. The chrysalis have also similar spots to the worms, which are found near the first articulation. When the chrysalis survives long enough to accomplish its metamorphosis as a butterfly or moth, this inherits the black spots, which again are transmuted to the eggs.

This power of transmission

makes the disease a most difficult problem to solve; for the germs appear, if once deposited, never to be eradicated, but are continued from one generation to another. It need hardly be said that continued efforts have been made to find some solution of the problem. Up to the present the history of all attempts to cure silkworms once attacked is the history of a series of failures; happily not so with preventative measures. Before, however, passing on to the history of the disease, its effects, and the various specifics employed in the numberless attempts made to subdue it, some account of the patient and its product may be found interesting.

With many another necessary, many another luxury, Europe owes its first knowledge of silk and the silkworm to the fossil civilisation of the 'heathen Chinese.' The annals of that quaint nation relate that under the reign of King Fou-lu, who flourished about 2000 B.C., silk was used to make the strings of a musical instrument called 'kin.' The art of rearing silkworms for industrial purposes is attributed to the wife of the Emperor Hoang-ti (2698 B.C.). In gratitude she was created the titular deity of the silkworm, and her name given to a star forming part of a constellation called in her honour 'Tsang-fang' (the house of the silkworms).

During the reign of the Emperor Yu (2205 B.C.) the culture of silkworms and the manufacture of silken fabrics had made considerable progress, for we are told that several provinces of the empire paid tribute in raw silk and silk tissues of various colours. Up to the third century B.C. the Chinese were apparently the sole producers of silk fabrics. They carefully preserved the secret of manufacture from the outer barbarians

for long after. It is supposed that the Egyptians, who brought the manufacture of cotton tissues to a marvellous perfection, knew nothing of silk. Nevertheless the silkworm, by means of the renown of its products, was slowly but surely preparing for an advance westward. It was due to a woman's wit that the silkworm at last crossed the jealously guarded frontier of the Celestial Empire.

Abel Rémusat, in his *Histoire de la Ville de Khotan*, tells the tale as follows: 'Being on friendly terms with the Emperors of China, the Kings of Khotan had often, but always vainly, asked for a supply of silkworms. Moreover, the severest penalties were enacted upon those who attempted to transport either the worms or their eggs out of China. Towards the fourth century B.C. a King of Khotan having obtained in marriage a Chinese princess, privately told her there were no silkworms at her future home, and that if she wanted to have any silk robes she must manage to bring with her some silkworms. The princess forthwith hid a quantity of eggs in her coiffure, and, protected by virtue of her rank from the prohibitive measures in practice at the Chinese frontiers, succeeded in introducing the much-desired silk to Khotan, where it flourished ever after.'

The wives of our worthy ancestors certainly did not trouble their heads about silk dresses at that period. The Ruskins of those days may have perhaps had occasion to exclaim against the unseemly and tasteless fashion then obtaining of dyeing the skin of a bluish tinge. By the way, what a tremendous sensation must have been made by the first appearance of the gilded, or rather azure, youth who inaugurated the new fashion! Of course the striking

adornment was first displayed on the cuticle of a member of the nobler sex. Do we not see among all savage nations 'tis the male usurps the finery! 'Eagle Eye,' or 'White Buffalo,' struts in all the splendour of cocked hat and striped blanket, whilst his squaw humbly admires, without daring to emulate. Civilisation, alas, has changed all this!

I cannot here give a detailed account of the progress of silk-worms and silk culture from the extreme east of the land of the rising sun to Europe. I will, however, briefly point out the slow and regular stages by which the advance was made westward. First the Greeks, then the Romans, imported silk from the Eastern nations. According to Lampride, Heliogabalus was the first Emperor of Rome who wore silk attire. 'I'm not going to be such a fool as to buy you silk at its weight in gold' ('Cum ab eo uxor sua peteret ut unico pallio blatteo serico uteretur, ille respondit: Absit ut auro fila pensentur'), was the rude answer (liberally translated) of the Emperor Aurelian to his better half, when she pleaded for at least one purple-silk robe. Of course the poor badgered monarch knew very well what that 'only one' meant. Let us hope, for the emperor's sake, that 'curtain lectures' had not then been instituted. Allowing for a certain pardonable exaggeration on the part of Aurelian, his response shows that silk robes, even as late as his reign (A.D. 269-275), were a very expensive luxury. It may, however, be said that those of a purple colour were the rarest and most prized.

As years passed on and commerce extended her wings, the Greeks and Romans imported silk in rapidly increasing quantities.

It is, however, one of the most marvellous facts in the history of industry that the entire Western world appear to have been for several hundred years after they imported silk in nearly complete ignorance of the origin of the textile matter they so much prized. Men of those days knew only that silk came from a far land, which, vague of situation, was shrouded in a mist of fables and wondrous attributes, reminding one of the kingdom of Prester John. The land of silk, Seres (hence Sericum), was, according to Ptolemy's *Geography* (vi. c. 16), a country situated between the Ganges and the Eastern Ocean. The commerce with Seres was carried on principally through the Persians, who, gravely relates the same authority as quoted above, transacted their business without a word being spoken—'nullo commercio lingue.' Pliny, in his *Natural History*, asserts that silk is a material collected from the leaves of trees. Notwithstanding the ignorance as to its origin, the importation of raw silk yearly increased in importance. During the fifth century A.D., silk fabrics were manufactured in the Roman Empire, Persia, and Central Asia. Seres, however, still maintained a monopoly as producer of the raw material.

Encouraged by the rulers of the Eastern Empire, the manufacture of silken stuffs became very considerable, and increased with rapid strides until the early part of the reign of the Emperor Justinian, who, having declared war against the Persians, placed the silk manufacturers of his dominions in much the same position as were our cotton-spinners during the long struggle between North and South of the United States. The Persians, having complete control over the navigation of the

gulf still bearing their name, at once barred the only route by which silk was then brought to Europe. The effect upon the trade of Constantinople was of course disastrous. Like our cotton-spinners during the crisis of 1861, the Roman weavers struggled on for some time; but, deprived of further supplies of the raw material, the manufactories necessarily closed one after another. Procope (*De Bello Gothico*, lib. iv. cap. 13) relates that the misery amongst the artisans was frightful; they either died of famine or emigrated to Persia. At this moment two Persian monks offered Justinian to introduce the silkworm. A mission—in, it is supposed, the north of India—had enabled these monks to learn the manner in which silkworms were raised and the cocoons were wound. They told Justinian silk was produced by a worm which ate mulberry-leaves; after a time became a butterfly; and that the eggs laid by these butterflies were collected and artificially hatched in order to obtain a further supply of worms. They proposed to obtain, not the worms, but the eggs. Justinian gladly encouraged them, and promised most magnificent rewards should success crown their efforts. They at once started for India, and at the end of the same year, A.D. 552, succeeded, after most perilous adventures, in safely returning to Byzantium, with a quantity of eggs concealed in their bamboo staffs. The next spring they hatched these precious eggs, brought up the worms as they had seen practised in the East by feeding them with the leaves of the mulberry-tree, separating the cocoons intended to be reserved for breeding, and showed how the remainder could be wound in order to obtain the golden thread

of such precious value. Christianity thus endowed the West with a new source of riches. The silk industry henceforth became European, although from the eleventh to the end of the thirteenth centuries the Arabs were the principal producers of silk.

In the eleventh century King Roger introduced silk culture into Italy, and during the Middle Ages the industry became almost an Italian monopoly. Amalfi, Pisa, Leghorn, Genoa, Venice, were then the great centres of silk production. In the sixteenth century Francis I. introduced silk culture into France. There—its last resting-place—the manufacture, if not the culture, may be said to have established itself more firmly than in any other country. Lyons is the metropolis of silk.

Notwithstanding great efforts made by scientists during the last few years to obtain a complete knowledge of the private life of the silkworm, it cannot at present be distinctly stated whether the insect be susceptible of the tender passion. After a most conscientious examination of the evidence pro and con, I am inclined to think not; for, unlike all romantic swains with whom numerous three-volume novels have made me acquainted, the silkworm is prosaic enough to infinitely prefer some more solid comestible than love. In fact, from the time of commencing their existence until, like love-forsworn hermits, they decide upon immuring themselves, each in his cell, silkworms have a most voracious appetite, and certainly appear to 'live to eat,' not 'eat to live.' It may therefore be as well to commence an account of the domestic economy of the insects with some description of its 'staff of life,' the mulberry-tree, and devote a short space to an examination of

the various changes in the ideas of sericulturists on the vital question of food supply since the time when Corsuccio de Rimni (1580), Olivier de Serres (1600), Bonafanti de Ceva (1660), and Christophe Isnard (1665), described the accepted usages of their times.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the 'murier noir,' or red mulberry-tree, was almost universally grown for silkworms. Bonafanti asserts that the leaves of the tree which produces the black, or, as we call it, the red, mulberry sold for three times as much as those of the white mulberry-tree, and he held the opinion that the former should always be given to the worms in the latter stages. Corsuccio held that the worms fed with the 'black' leaves were more vigorous than those fed with the leaves of the white mulberry. Laffernas—an authority on silk culture—writing several years after Bonafanti, quotes the price of the black mulberry-leaves much higher than those of the white, and remarks that the farmers of the Cevennes preferred the former. Now let us see what led to the change of opinion as to the virtues of the two species, for at the present time all, or nearly all, the worms reared in Europe are fed on the leaves of the white mulberry-tree. The first mention of the change is made by Isnard, who wrote in 1665, 'On commence à venir au blanc.' Bonafanti says, 'Sono di due sorte i mori l'uno bianco l'altro nero, é il nero é per il più nulle nostre italiane parte.'

To return to Isnard, who continues, 'Its leaves' (i.e. those of the white) 'are more appetising to the worms than are those of the black, and the worms produce a finer silk.' A century later the 'black' mulberry-tree, of which the old chroniclers held such a

high opinion, was, for purposes of silk culture, practically obsolete.

The farmers preferred the white mulberry-tree, closely pruned. M. Latour, a French writer, and author of an ms. giving an account of the plague of 1750, asks himself whether the cause of the disease (of which, by the way, he gives no clear details) may not be traced back to the engrafting and pruning of the mulberry-tree, and the custom of manuring its roots to an inordinate extent.

The custom of closely pruning the tree gradually obtained an immense empire, in consequence of the great advantages it represented, as by this means more leaves were obtained from each tree, and they were cheaper both to grow and to gather. It is for these reasons that the traveller through the dales of the Cevennes and across the broad plains of Lombardy is wearied to death by the straight ranks of pruned and stumpy mulberry-trees, from which nearly every line of Nature's gracious beauty has been eliminated by the knife of the careful husbandman.

'A rose of Jericho,' writes a charming French author, 'however dry and withered, will, if plunged for an instant into boiling water, at once regain all its original form and beauty. Our recollections are something like the flower of Palestine—a perfume, an old air, a trivial sound, often have the same effect on our minds as has water on the rose of the Holy Land, and bring to life in an instant long-forgotten forms, long-forgotten scenes and events of the past.' Perchance this little chat about silkworms may conjure up to my reader visions of those happy days of youth when to keep silkworms appeared one of the greatest pleasures of life—the quiet garden; the old gnarled mul-

berry-tree with its luscious fruit; the trays full of the insatiable little insects, who, alas, were sometimes neglected for the superior attractions of bird's-nesting or a drive, and left to hunger and to die, mayhap to be surreptitiously thrown out of the window by some privileged servant, irate with the 'messing.'

These are happy recollections. Some of us may not have found rearing silkworms at all an amusing occupation. Goethe, that heaven-born genius, was one. The other day, in an Austrian journal published at Goerz, appeared an anecdote, supposed to have been related by the poet, of his experiences as a sericulteur, a story to my mind so comically dismal that I venture to give a translation *in extenso*:

'About 1760 a certain hobby of my father's caused us children a good deal of bother. It was sericulture, of which the extension in his opinion was of great importance. Some friends of his, residing at Hanau, who cultivated silkworms with great care, enabled him to carry out his hobby. They sent him some eggs, which were hatched as soon as the mulberry-trees had sufficient leaves; as soon as hatched the little insects, so minute as to be hardly visible to the naked eyes, were surrounded with great precautions. In a shed were placed tables of considerable size, in order that they might have plenty of room; for the worms grew rapidly, and became after the last change of skin so voracious that we could hardly get enough leaves to keep them alive. We had to feed them both day and night; for it is of the greatest importance that they should not be without food for a moment at the time they are undergoing their marvellous transformations. When the weather

was fine the occupation of feeding the worms was no doubt an amusement; but cold weather set in suddenly, this damaged the foliage of the mulberry-trees, and necessarily caused a great danger to the worms.

'Great above all was our disgust when it rained. During their last shedding of skin the worms cannot bear any moisture; it was therefore necessary to carefully wipe each leaf. However, we could not thus perfectly dry them; in consequence, also, perhaps from another cause, divers diseases made their appearance amid our charge. The poor insects perished by thousands, and the stench resulting was simply pestilential. In order to save the few remaining healthy worms it became necessary to take away the dead and diseased. This operation was most sickening and wearisome, and caused us children many an unhappy hour.'

However far, to the sore discomfort of his progeny, the father of Goethe may have carried these experiments in silkworm-rearing, his knowledge must have been necessarily far less complete than that of those inhabitants of the sunny South, who for generation upon generation have gained a livelihood by means of the producer of the golden thread.

I well remember, several years ago, setting out with a party of friends from the quaint old city of Arles, with its forlorn look of better days, its sad wealth of ruined palaces, on my first visit to a 'magnanerie,' or silkworm-rearing house. June yet was young, and all foliage looked green and fresh as our horses trotted gaily along the straight road close by the banks of the swift-flowing Rhône.

Presently we turned up a side lane winding amid the rugged hills, in years gone by well-

guarded strongholds of the fierce Camisards, those Covenanters of France, whose energetic spirit and simple religion, unbroken and undestroyed, despite the most ruthless persecution ever chronicled in the pages of history, have been handed down from father to son unto the present generation. We wended our way amid groves and mulberry-trees and vineyards until we came within sight of a great building nestling in a quiet valley. A low ground-floor and the towering story above, with walls principally composed of hinged shutters, open to admit the evening breeze, gave the place somewhat the air of a tanner's drying-house. The approach of our modest victoria caused quite a sensation. The men and women picking the leaves quitted their task to look at the strangers; and the black-eyed, brown-faced, tightly-swathed babies, hanging in animated clusters from the branches of a spreading tree close by the road, stared in solemn wonder and dumb amazement at the unwonted sight. Our coachman, as is the wont of the Jehus of Gaul, drew up with prodigious splutter and a mighty crack of his whip in front of the magnanerie, at the door of which leaned a sallow young man, whose noble brow was ornamented with an elaborately-arranged curl, *à la Capoul*.

This was the manager. Looking delightfully cool and neat in his clean white blouse as he came forward to greet our introducer, he expressed himself charmed to have the opportunity of showing us over the establishment, and invited us to enter. Just as we were about doing so he noticed, evidently for the first time, that one lady of our party was in a delicate state of health. Stopping us at once, he exclaimed, 'I am desolated to disarrange you, but it is

impossible this lady should enter.' At our astonished requests for his reason the little man explained, with paroxysms of excuses and apologies, that silkworms were seriously affected by the proximity of any person in ill-health, and that were the lady to enter the magnanerie the result would probably be most disastrous to his 'éducations.' He shrugged his shoulders, jerked his arms, and even clutched his wavy lock in comical dismay at having to forbid the 'aimable dame' to enter. There stood the excitable Frenchman, energetically protesting and gesticulating; our friend, rather red in the face, as is the manner with Britishers when annoyed, holding forth, in more than doubtful French, upon the hardships of the lady, having come all that way in the hot sun, and then not to be allowed to see the object of her visit in consequence of an absurd superstition. He at last grew extremely sarcastic as to French politeness, and exclaimed against mannerisms which appeared kindly, but which concealed an innate unwillingness to oblige.

We must have made rather a curious picture. The swarthy gatherers, laden with huge panniers of fresh green leaves, passing from the bright outer sunlight into the cool dark leaf-chamber; the manager, with every feature of his dark southern face quivering in earnest remonstrance; our coachman—a Fra Diavolo-looking individual, arrayed in black-velveteen coat, broad red waist-sash, and slouched hat—perched high on his box, flicking with his whip the greedy flies from the backs of his sorry Rosinantes, and every now and then adding his quota to the discussion of our fuming friend; and 'a chorus' grouped around. Finding the manager inexorable, and as the

innocent cause of the fuss had all along urged that she really did not care a bit about seeing the place, we finally left her quietly seated in the carriage, and entered the *magnanerie* in the wake of our guide. This rearing-house had been recently built with all the most modern improvements based on the '*système Robinet*,' a great authority upon silkworm hygiene.

The ground-floor was very low, and divided into several rooms, the largest being the leaf-chamber, half filled with the freshly-gathered leaves, with their oppressive scent; then came the stove-room, containing the stove from which shafts carried the hot air to the story above. In this room, as the hottest place in the building, are placed the cartons, or long narrow slips of paper, thickly mottled with patches of silkworms' eggs. There was also an ingenious machine for 'baking' the cocoons, by which means the chrysalis contained therein are destroyed, allowing the silk to be unwound at any length of time. Were not this precaution taken, the chrysalis would, after a certain time, eat a way through the walls of its cell, and thus destroy the silk. As we climbed the ladder leading to the story above, we became aware of a curious rustling crunching sound, which gradually increased in intensity as we ascended. Following the manager, we stepped into a spacious lofty room, the movable shutters forming the sides of which were open to their utmost to admit the warm sunlight and pure air. Here in countless myriads were the causes of the noise we had already remarked. On large tables the silkworms were scattered amid the leaves in an animated voracious mass; some were slowly choosing a handy branch among the brushwood placed on the table on which to

spin their cocoons; others, again, had already disappeared within the walls of their flossy cells.

Here, surrounded by his charges, to which men and women were ever bringing fresh supplies of leaves, the manager recounted to us an anecdote, to explain his reluctance to admit our friend. It appears he was once employed at the experimental rearing-house of the commission of silks at Lyons. Their education had succeeded perfectly. The worms could not have been in a better state. All was going on well in the establishment, when a girl suddenly fell ill of fever—so ill that a bed was made for her in a room in which some silkworms were being brought up or 'educated,' and remained there all night. The next morning those who had care of the room were disagreeably surprised to find that two-thirds of the worms were diseased, whilst in the other rooms no sign of such a thing was discernible. This circumstance, which, after all, may have been but an accidental coincidence, had convinced our friend that the near approach of any person in ill-health was most prejudicial to the worms. After taking leave of the manager of the *magnanerie*, and as we merrily trotted along in the gloaming, we had an animated discussion upon the silkworm and its ways, which lasted until our horses clattered through the narrow and deserted streets of Arles.

Probably many of my readers have seen silkworms' eggs: minute round objects flattened at each end like a lentil. These eggs are deposited on long strips of paper called '*cartons*,' of which I have already made mention. When just laid they are of a yellow colour, by degrees turning red, next a greenish hue, then a dull

gray; and at the period they are nearly ready to hatch, the gray tinge turns to a dull blue, shading to a yellow, until in the final stage they become white. Many sericulturists follow a curious custom of plunging the eggs into some generous wine. This process is supposed to give the embryo worms strength, with what truth I cannot say. We have already seen that in a scientifically-managed rearing-house the cartons with the eggs *in situ* are hung up in the 'chambre d'air' artificially heated to facilitate the hatching. Small farmers manage in a more homely manner: they either get the feminine portion of their families to place the cartons in the folds of their dresses, and thus hatch the eggs by animal warmth, or they envelop the eggs in wadding, and place them near a fire; sometimes, again, they are hatched by means of heat obtained from manure. But to return to our magnanerie of scientific management. The usual system there employed is, after a day or two, to carefully detach the eggs by means of a wooden knife from the cartons, and transfer them to wooden boxes. The temperature of the 'chambre d'air' is gradually raised two degrees per diem, until about 77° Fahr. is reached. The sericulturists try to hatch their worms just at the time the mulberry-trees begin to bud. This of course varies with the seasons. However, in the Drôme the peasants follow strictly the dictates of a cherished proverb—'A la Saint Marc (25 April) il n'est ni trop tôt ni trop tard.' If the seasons go wrong, why, that cannot be the fault of the proverb!

Once hatched, the worms should be kept in a temperature of 16° to 17° Centigrade for the first two days of their existence, increasing

in warmth by a degree each day until 25° Centigrade is reached at the eleventh day. Worms which cast their skins four times have what are called five 'ages.' When these 'ages' or changes are comprised in thirty days, the duration of the first age is five days, the second four days, the third and fourth six days, and the fifth nine days. Under different treatment these evolutions of the insects take place more slowly or quickly; but the average duration of life of the insect, from the time of hatching until it leaves off eating and prepares to spin, is about forty-five days. This again, however, varies considerably according to the conditions under which it exists. By means of extreme heat worms may be made to spin in twenty days. During the course of its existence the insect increases in weight more than 30,000 times that of its egg. No sooner out of the egg than the worm commences a career of eating, which continues with but brief interruption until it prepares to spin. In the Cevennes the country people say, 'Un ver qui ne mange pas prépare à muer ou à mourir.' A silkworm is thus at all times an excellent feeder; but the following calculations, made by an Italian savant, show that at its fifth age the insect arrives at the apogee of its gastronomical powers:

'If, at the first age, the consumption is estimated at as 1, at the second age it will be 3, third 10, fourth 30, fifth 175.'

It is calculated, by the same author, that during its fifth age a worm consumes each day more than its weight of mulberry-leaves!—a feat, I should think, not likely to be excelled by the most accomplished 'anti-Tannerist;' and the silkworms may be safely called one of the greatest eaters of all known insects or animals.

Several experiments have been made to determine the quantity of leaves consumed by worms which have produced a certain quantity of silk. The calculations are probably only approximately correct; they are as under:

The average quantity of worms produced from an ounce weight of eggs is estimated to consume about 700 kilos of leaves.

97 livres 8 onces of leaves give $7\frac{1}{2}$ livres of cocoons, producing 18 oz. of pure cocoons. These 18 oz. of cocoons give 8 oz. of 'soie grège,' or raw silk of commerce.

These calculations will give some idea of the immense quantity of worms required to produce the silk annually consumed in Europe.

Signor Debernardi, in a work entitled *El Filatoresta Serico*, gives the following information as to the manner in which the insects should be fed:

'First age.—The day upon which the insects are hatched three meals should be given at equal periods from each other.

'Second age.—Same as first.

'Third age.—Three meals each day, the first at sunrise, the second at midday, the third at sunset. At the time the worms shed their skins, which occurs at about the fifth day, only one meal should be given, to prevent the leaves remaining on the trays and fermenting.

'Fourth age.—During all this period three or four meals a day are sufficient.

'Fifth age.—The same number of meals given at the same times. During the first two days the meals should be rather light than abundant; at the epoch of their greatest voracity ('pega') an extra meal should be given.

Many intelligent sericulturists consider it a bad habit to feed the

worms during the night, and declare it is a mistake to imagine that the greater the quantity of nourishment given to the worms in a certain time the more they develop and give the greater results. The real result gained is to waste the leaves and to outrage the hygienic condition of the insects.

In Italy, France, and Spain there were formerly many distinct types of cocoons, and the farmers prided themselves upon the special characteristics of their breed.

For nearly a quarter of a century the mortality caused by the pébrine has necessitated a large annual importation of 'graine' or eggs. In fact, for several years, nearly all the worms reared in the above-mentioned countries were hatched from Asiatic eggs.

Thus the different species of cocoons produced in each country have been in a great measure rendered uniform, as has also, by a natural sequence of events, the silk derived from them. It is, however, evident that the leaf of a mulberry-tree growing on a granitic soil and in a temperate zone necessarily contains different properties from that cultivated on the rich alluvion of the plains or in a hotter climate. From this cause—in spite of the common source from which different European countries have long derived their stock—these have to a diminished extent still retained those characteristics which were formerly so marked, and have enabled the followed classification—given in the valuable work of Dr. Luppi, *Le Dictionnaire de Séricologie*—to be made:

Italy.

Piedmont Proper.—These silks are specially adapted for the manufacture of velvets. They are not very brilliant in colour.

Piedmont Somellina.—Very similar to that of Tuscany, and is wound into fine sizes or titres.

Naples and Messina.—This is as a rule very excellent silk, but generally badly wound.

Fossombrone.—These silks are much esteemed for regularity and fineness; they are specially adapted, from the nature of the cocoon, for the finest counts or sizes. Inferior silk is hardly known in this province.

The Old Duchies and Tuscany.—They have not the fineness of the Fossombrone silks, but are often more elastic.

Lombardy (Upper, Lower).—Very good silks, excellently wound. Brianza, Como, Varese produce silks of the finest quality. Lower Lombardy—i.e. Lodi, Pavia, Lower Bergamo, &c.—produces an inferior silk, which is generally less skilfully wound than in Upper Lombardy. As a rule Lombardy silks are not of a very brilliant colour.

France.

The silks of the Ardèche, Drôme, and Isère are used almost entirely for the manufacture of satin; the quality is very good. The same can be said of nearly all the other silk-producing departments.

It would take more space than is at my disposal to give a detailed account of the Asiatic silks, which during the last few years have become of such great importance to the 'monde séricole.' Suffice it to remark that Asiatic raw silk is, as a rule, much inferior to that produced in Europe and Asia Minor. This is almost entirely due to slovenly winding, and therefore large quantities of cocoons are annually imported from India, China, and Japan to be wound by the skilled workmen of

Italy. The Japanese, however—that marvellous nation of imitators—bid fair soon to equal the European winders in the perfection of their work.

I purpose in this sketch of the pébrine to treat more particularly of the history of the malady in France. My reasons are twofold. There have I had the more frequent opportunities of witnessing its effects. To France must be awarded the unenviable honour of being the birthplace of the disease. From Gaul,

'As when

A stone is flung into some sleeping tarn
The circle widens till it lip the marge,'

this malady has spread to nearly every silk-producing country in the world. The culture of the mulberry-tree and the silkworm commenced in France some time during the thirteenth century in Provence, the Comtat d'Avignon, and Languedoc. Louis XIV. encouraged the industry, but it is only during the present century that it has made great progress. In the time of the 'Grand Monarque' 100,000 kilos' weight of cocoons was the average annual quantity produced. In 1788 it had increased to 6,000,000 kilos. The Revolution put a stop to the progress, and the total came down to 3,000,000 kilos. Under the fostering care of Napoleon I. the production rapidly increased; and after 1815, when all countries became at peace, this progress, as shown by the table given hereunder, was even greater:

From 1821 to 1830 . . .	10,000,000 kilos.
" 1831 to 1840 . . .	14,000,000 "
" 1841 to 1845 . . .	17,000,000 "
" 1846 to 1852 . . .	21,000,000 "
In 1853	26,000,000 "

The average price in 1853 per pound of cocoons was about five francs. The culture had therefore in that year produced silk to the value of 130,000,000 francs. A

M. Dumas, in his report to the Senate in 1858, estimated the average annual value of silk produced in the world at 1,000,000,000 francs. France thus produced more than a tenth of the grand total.

If this progress had been sustained, aided by the prosperous times under the Second Empire, the value of the present production would have probably been over 600,000,000 francs. Unhappily, at the time mulberry-trees were being planted on all sides, this prosperity disappeared before the ravages of a terrible scourge.

After the harvest of 1853 (the largest of the century), the yield fell in 1854 to 21,500,000 kilos cocoons; in 1855 to 19,800,000; in 1856 to 7,500,000; and progressively in 1863 to 6,500,000; 1864 to 6,000,000; 1865 to 4,000,000; causing a loss of 100,000,000 francs for the single year 1865. The yield in 1879 was about 3,500,000.

The cause of this sad state of affairs, the pébrine, first made its appearance during the year 1848 in the Cevennes. Notwithstanding the disease, there was an abundant harvest; indeed, the quantity produced was so great, that (partly also on account of the Revolution) prices fell to 2 fr. 50 c. per kilo cocoons. It was, however, found that a great quantity of the worms died in 1849. This mortality increased rapidly during 1851, 1852, 1853. Nevertheless, the production of cocoons increased, and the year 1853 was, as we have already seen, the most abundant of the century.

When the unfortunate wine-growers of France beheld league after league of vines rapidly succumbing to the attacks of a countless host of phylloxera, they naturally enough sought a panacea amid the numerous compositions

brought to their aid by the scientific world. After numberless and costly experiments, it has been found that a district once seriously attacked is doomed; and the vigneron has only partially succeeded in neutralising the evil by replanting with vines imported from America, which, to a certain extent, are proof against the attacks of the insects.

The silk-growers, upon finding their indigenous 'grains' failing them, adopted a similar course to the vigneron, and sought aid from abroad; and the apparent prosperity, in spite of the outbreak of the disease, is explained by the fact that large quantities of eggs were imported from Lombardy. These eggs were for a time a success, hence the 'great year' of 1853. Severe losses were, however, sustained by those farmers who continued to cultivate the indigenous eggs. In 1853 the disease spread to the supply-house, Lombardy—spread with such awful rapidity, that in 1856 it was in as bad a state as France; and thus the eggs sent to that country in 1856 caused a total collapse of the crop, and prices rose from five francs per kilo in 1855 to eight francs in 1856. Spain was also attacked. The crisis was grave. Demand, it is said, creates supply, and the sericulturists had one great advantage. Silkworms' eggs are very portable—42,000 eggs do not weigh an ounce, and each worm produces about 1000 mètres silk.

Adventurous merchants journeyed to the Grecian Archipelago, to Greece, to Turkey, and to Asia Minor. Adrianople, above all, furnished a supply which for a time neutralised the effects of the disease. Soon, however, those countries became in their turn affected. The explorers went still further afield, and eggs have been

successively imported from Bokara, Corea, Manchowrie, Turkestan, Georgia, China, Persia, Chili, and Japan. From the last-named country France and Italy now draw their chief supplies, as the only source from which at the present time can be obtained healthy eggs.

The outbreak of pébrine and various other diseases, which from time to time have affected the silkworms, appears in a great measure due to the pernicious manner in which the education of the worms has for many years been conducted by the average silk-grower. It is the old, old story—over-production, and habitual disregard of the first precepts of Nature. Anxious to obtain the greatest possible quantity of silk in the smallest possible space of time, the majority of farmers have been for generations in the habit of heating their rearing-houses to an inordinate extent, as it had been found that the worms by this means could be 'forced' through the different stages in about twenty-five days, instead of between forty and fifty, the natural period—thus, as the farmers aver, insuring a triple economy of leaves, labour, and time. Moreover, as artificial warmth is easily exhausted, the farmers hit upon the plan of carefully closing every aperture of their rearing-houses in order to keep the fresh pure air from the worms. This annual progress of 'suffocation' obtained for many years, and the farmers pointed with pride to the extraordinary yield of silk obtained in their unwholesome sheds. Old Isnard, as far back as 1665, sounded the key-note of warning against this evil custom when he wrote: 'Un air chaud et étouffant est beaucoup plus nuisible qu'un air frais et venteux.' Since that far-

off time many an intelligent and successful sericulturer both in France and Italy has lifted up his voice in earnest protest against the habit of 'non-ventilation,' but without avail. One can fancy the ignorant farmers saying, as they 'chuckled and crowed' to behold their plentiful harvests, 'What matters the future? Look at present results!' Nemesis awaited them, and when the pébrine swept over the land, those narrow-minded men beheld their prosperity dissolve like a rope of sand. Only those sericulturers who had conducted their education upon scientific principles in a measure escaped for a time the full effects of the plague.

Up to the eighteenth century French silk-growers were in the habit of recruiting their stock every three years by adding a certain number of eggs imported from Italy, in order, as they said, to give strength to the old breed. Of late years, and up to the time of the disease, this custom had been abandoned, and a system of 'breeding in and in' took its place, the sericulturers priding themselves upon the length of time they had preserved their particular types. This system, although doubtless calculated to create a uniformity of quality, has probably been one of the most potent causes (by means of enfeebling the stock) of leaving a loophole for the diseases which now, year after year, form such a serious drawback to the success of silkworm culture.

The losses of the silk-growers do not, like those of the vignerons, affect all classes; and the generality of people know little and careless of matters not affecting their own particular interest. This was certainly the case in France; for when in 1867, after eighteen years of suffering, a deputy of the Gard asked in the Chamber

what the Government intended doing to combat the disease, and to relieve the great distress among the silk-growers of the South, so little did the House understand the gravity of the situation, that, upon the deputy estimating the losses already inflicted upon the industry as about two milliards francs, they joked and sneered at the statement. This was the more unpardonable, from the fact that in 1865 the Senate was asked to deliberate upon a petition signed by 3574 proprietors of the silk departments, praying that measures should be taken instantly 'à diminuer les charges de la propriété par le dégrèvement des impôts, pour mettre à la disposition des éleveurs des graines de meilleurs provenances, et pour l'étude de toutes les questions qui se rattachaient à cette épizootie persistante, tant au point de vue de la pathologie qu'à celui de l'hygiène.'

For many years anterior to 1865, scientists and practical men had been doing their utmost to stop the ravages of the disease. The exponents of the 'pure air' theory were enabled to illustrate in those trying times the efficacy of their system. The Marquis of Spada, a large cultivator of the then Roman States, published a tract on the education of silk-worms, of which I will here give a few extracts: 'During the first three ages open one or several windows during five minutes every three hours. During the fourth age open all the windows, even keeping some open all night if the weather is fine. At the fifth age keep *all* the windows open, whatever may be the variation of the temperature, and continue the education as if in the open air.'

Notwithstanding occasional day temperatures of as low as 50° Fahr., when the worms were in

their last age the Marquis found the worms flourished.

It is true that by following such precepts the cultivator will not obtain cocoons in twenty-five or thirty days; but it must be remembered that in the Romagna (where such processes obtain) the silk-growers had good crops at the time Lombardy and France were ruined; and nowhere are such large cocoons produced as in the Roman States. Robinet of Lyons, Chartron of St. Vallier, the Marquis de Crivelli of Inverigo, the Chevalier Vasco of Turin, and many other notable sericulturists, have followed with success and ably advocated the system of free ventilation.*

Perfect cleanliness, careful management, and good ventilation go far to guarantee the sericulturist from the pébrine, provided always that he has been fortunate enough to obtain 'graine,' or eggs, free from the germs of the disease. I have already described with what difficulty healthy eggs were obtained; how adventurous merchants had gradually extended their researches from the shores of Europe to the extreme East in order to obtain them.

As the supplies became more and more costly—at the same time doubtful of quality—thoughtful men, fully convinced that the feebleness of the worms (owing to artificial production) was one of the most potent causes of the ravages made by the pébrine, tried to devise some process by which the degenerate indigenous races could be restored to their ancient vigour.

Efforts have been made in this direction for many years; but one of the most intelligent and ener-

* The writer begs to offer his sincere thanks to the last three named gentlemen for valuable information, supplied with ready courtesy, on this subject.

getic searchers in the good work was the late Dr. Chavannes of Lausanne. Thanks to the extreme kindness of Madame Chavannes, I have been enabled to peruse the complete works of the doctor with his profuse ms. notes. Dr. Chavannes modestly disclaims all pretensions of being the originator of the method he carried out so successfully. In the pages of *Les Principales Maladies des Vers à Soie et leur Guérison*, a competitive essay 'couronné,' August 1861, by the Institut Royal Lombard des Sciences et des Arts, he gives extracts from the works of those men—from Boissier de Sauvage, 1763, to M. Lopet, 1859—by the suggestions contained in whose experiences he had profited.

The system pursued by M. Chavannes was not an elaborate one, simply a systematic adaptation of Nature's stern law, 'survival of the fittest.' The doctor first obtained a quantity of eggs, known to be of a stock feeble and diseased. Hatching these eggs at the usual time, he placed the worms, when four or five days old, upon the branches of a mulberry-tree, situated in a sheltered corner of his garden, and enveloped with fine cotton gauze as a protection against birds, &c. The worms were then left to themselves. The first year nearly ninety per cent perished. Feeble and not used to 'roughing it,' the worms were either killed by the unwonted exposure to rain and cold, or were blown from the leaves to the ground, and there perished from starvation. The few survivors furnished a stock with which the experiment was repeated next year with more favourable results; and so on, until after a lapse of four or five years the loss of worms was reduced to about two per cent. The doctor dis-

tributed the eggs of this regenerate race to all parts of France and Italy with most satisfactory results. Sericulturists who had been fortunate enough to receive them declared in many instances their rearing-houses to be oases of health among the deserts of diseased educations existing in the establishments of their less fortunate neighbours.

The system of Dr. Chavannes has one great disadvantage. It is sure, but slow; three to four years elapse before the worms are quite 'regenerated.' The sorely pressed sericulturists felt deeply the want of some process to dispel quickly their distress. Hence the wholesale importation of eggs already described, and again the many attempts made to discover a certain means of selecting the healthy worms from those stricken of the plague.

In 1849 a M. Guérin-Meneville discovered the existence of corpuscles in all worms suffering from the pébrine. During 1850 these corpuscles were further traced both in the chrysalis and the moth by the celebrated Professor Cornelia, who, I believe, was the first to suggest that the possibility of thus detecting the disease could be turned to good account. In 1857 Signor Ossimo proved their presence in the eggs. To M. Pasteur, a French scientist, was, however, reserved the honour of creating a practical benefit from the crude ideas of the earlier discoverers. A committee appointed by the French Senate having decided upon sending a scientist to the silk-growing departments, in order to make a thorough investigation of the causes of the disease, and, if possible, to find a remedy, Dr. Pasteur was offered the post, which, after much doubt and hesitation, he accepted.

Before starting for the scene of

his labours, M. Pasteur had an interview with the Empress Eugénie, who took a great interest in the matter. M. Pasteur describes this interview in the following courtly preface to his work, entitled *Etudes sur la Maladie des Vers à Soie* :

‘Madame, — En dédiant ces études à votre Majesté j’accomplis un devoir. Je venais de les entreprendre à la bienveillante prière de mon illustre maître, M. Dumas, et j’étais effrayé et découragé par les difficultés sans nombre que j’y avais entrevues lorsque votre Majesté me fit l’honneur de m’en parler au Palais de Compiègne. L’Impératrice, touchée des misères, qu’entraînait à sa suite la maladie qui, depuis quinze ans, décimait les vers à soie et ruinait l’une des plus belles industries agricoles de la France, daigna prendre intérêt à mes premières observations et m’inviter à les suivre, me disant que la science n’a jamais plus de grandeur dans les efforts qu’elle fait pour étendre le cercle de ses applications bienfaisantes. Je fis alors à votre Majesté une promesse que j’ai eu à cœur d’acquitter par cinq années de persévérantes recherches. Je me devais à moi-même de faire connaître cette circonstance d’abord pour remercier votre Majesté des encouragements ensuite pour apprendre aux populations du Midi, depuis si longtemps éprouvées par le mal que j’ai cherché à prévenir à qui elles devront faire remonter leur reconnaissance si, comme j’en ai le ferme espoir, mes études sont couronnées de succès.

‘Je suis avec le plus profond respect, madame, de votre Majesté le très humble, très obéissant, et très fidèle serviteur,

‘L. PASTEUR.’

Behold the irony of Fate ! M.

Pasteur addressed, in his preface dated 1870, the esteemed consort of a powerful monarch, the brilliant centre of a powerful Court. A few short months saw the Emperor a prisoner, ‘sa Majesté Impériale’ a hunted fugitive, owing liberty, perhaps life, threatened by a cowardly mob, to an obscure American dentist. Yet a little while and the wife mourned her husband ; and later on the childless widow returned from the spot where fell her last hope and joy. Verily a depth of misery which methinks must touch the hearts of all worthy of the name of man.

Having availed himself of the advice of competent judges, M. Pasteur left Paris for Alais, a town in the Cevennes, and installed himself in a house near to a small magnanerie, pleasantly situated in a quiet valley about a mile from the town. There the professor passed several years of intense study and laborious research, which (although at the cost of seriously affecting his health) at last rewarded him with the grand satisfaction of having in a measure succeeded in the accomplishment of the difficult task to which he had devoted his intellect and his energies. The first experiments decided him in the conviction already accepted by Cornelia, that pébrine was caused by corpuscles existing in the eggs, and transmuted through all the different metamorphoses of the insect. Once assured of this fact, he appears in a measure to have abandoned to others the purely theoretical elements of the subject as to causes and effects, and, even putting on one side as fallacious all idea of saving worms once attacked, energetically devoted his investigations to the elucidation of some practicable method by which the silk-growers would be enabled

with certainty to select healthy stock. Holding the opinion that to obtain healthy eggs it is necessary to breed solely from those chrysalæ in which no sign of corpulosity appears, M. Pasteur first pursued the following plan: taking about a kilo of cocoons without selection from the ordinary stock, six days after the worms had commenced spinning, he placed them in a room heated night and day by means of a stove to a temperature of 25 to 30 degrees Cent., thus reducing the time required for metamorphosis of the chrysalæ by about four to five days. He then carefully examined several chrysalæ of this representative stock with a microscope, and if the slightest trace of corpules could be found, the 'éducation' was condemned as unfit for 'grainage' or future rearing. Desirous of perfecting a system by which the produce of each moth could be kept distinct, he availed himself of a method invented by Signor Delprino, and further improved by Mitifiot, called 'grainage cellulaire.' The *modus operandi* is as follows: a short time before the female moths prepare to lay their eggs, each one is carefully isolated on the carton by means of a metal disc, within the walls of which it deposits its eggs. The microscopist then at his leisure examines each cluster, and the eggs of those in which the slightest trace of corpules exists are destroyed.

M. Pasteur claims by means of this system to have solved the 'question pébrine,' asserting he has enabled, by means of careful, intelligent, microscopical examination of healthy eggs, to be assured for all time. Many authorities refused, and still refuse, to accept this statement as fact, among the number Signor Delprino, who in several pamphlets

gives instances in which the selected eggs have turned out a complete failure.

M. Pasteur retorts that the only few instances in which the eggs selected by his system failed to give good results were entirely due to the faulty management of the education. Upon one of the critics of microscopical selection M. Pasteur is very severe, and politely infers of his criticism that

'All was false and hollow, though his
tongue
Dropt manna, and could make the worse
appear
The better reason.'

However, to avail oneself of a homely proverb, 'the proof of the pudding comes in the eating,' and the world has certainly received most convincing testimony of the value of the outcome of M. Pasteur's labours and the correctness of his assertions. His system obtains not only in numerous rearing-houses established by the Governments of France and Italy, but the microscopical selection is now almost universally carried out in the largest industrial 'graineries,'—in fact, has become a recognised necessity.

At an extensive rearing-house near Milan, owned by a Signor Susani, the selecting process is carried on to a considerable extent, seventy girls being employed during several months of the year, at the end of each harvest, in examining the moths' eggs with microscopes. Besides the actual microscopists, there are over a hundred hands employed in preparing the moths and eggs for examination, placing the former in their cells for the 'éducation cellulaire,' &c. The system has also found great favour in the eyes of the French and Italian peasants, than whom none accept innovations, especially those of a scientific character, with more suspicion or

reluctance. The Italian small farmers in particular evince a marked preference for eggs which have been examined, termed 'seme seletto.'

It was probably due to the microscopical examination, supplemented by the 'grainage cellulaire' and the gradual abandonment of the excessive and unhealthy forcing processes, that the ravages of the pébrine were at first checked, and then within the last few years almost entirely subdued. It is said these mysterious diseases overwhelm as a vast wave, and recede only at the appointed time decreed by Nature's law, a time which no effort of man can shorten or foretell. These arguments have unfortunately a certain basis of fact; nevertheless, it appears undoubted, thanks to the vast strides made by scientific research, that we are enabled with a measure of certainty to trace in nearly every instance the first cause of these destructive maladies to the artificial, and hence unhealthy, manner in which the suffering species has been treated. The willing horse has been overdriven in hope of greater gain, and then comes the time of retribution; and verily this time of retribution has been a sad one for the sericulturists.

We hear much nowadays of agricultural distress; the farmers utter loud complaints of the hardness of the times. What with high rents, dear labour, small yields, and low prices, their case is doubtless a hard one. Yet imagine their position if, incapable of growing other than wheat, some subtle malady, some worm in the bud, were to render the harvesting of even a portion of this solitary crop most problematical, whilst Fashion's fickle laws had decreed 'Thou shalt not eat bread,'

and in consequence thereof the vast majority existed on some other comestible,—say Liebig's Extract or Lloyd's Food—at the same time our benevolent Transatlantic cousins took the lion's share of business remaining to be done with the unfashionable residuum. It appears absurd even to imagine such a complication of woes. Yet to endure analogous ones has been the fate of the unhappy sericulturists. With all available capital embarked in rearing-houses, mills, and groves of mulberry-trees, their sole means of livelihood to rear silkworms, an industry which has supported generation upon generation, a dire pestilence has swept away their stock in millions. Fickle Fashion has during several years declared in favour of tissues in the composition of which silk bears but a small part, whilst prices for the limited demand are further kept down by the vast importations of Asiatic silks which flood the markets. Truly a dismal picture! In all silk-growing countries of Europe the loss and misery have been great, more especially in the very focus of the malady—the Cevennes; there, before the outbreak of the pébrine, an active and stalwart race found continued employment in breaking up the rocky hills and fashioning rude terraces with the *débris*, garnished with soil carried laboriously from the valleys below; mulberry-trees were then planted, and year by year the sides of the hills were covered with further spreading groves, which climbed even to their crest.

In spite of a laborious life, all were happy and contented, for prosperity grew upon them. The plague swept over them; and now for many years those once carefully tended groves have been abandoned, the golden tree no longer

enriches the land, and the inhabitants have either scattered far and wide, or, bowed down with long years of battling against misfortune, linger sadly amid the scenes of their former prosperity. Where reigned happiness, misery now is lord.

An eye-witness of the flood which a year or two since overwhelmed Szegedin in Hungary related that the ill-fated inhabitants, utterly underrating the imminent danger threatening them, stubbornly refused to assist the military sent by Government to strengthen the dykes which alone kept the devastating waters in check; at last, during one fearful night, the mighty flood burst its bonds asunder, and surged forward on its path of destruction. The heavy crash of falling houses, the howling of the wind, mingled in one wild tumult with the shrieks of women and the roar of the dashing waves. With a few glorious exceptions, the townspeople gave way to a panic-stricken fear. Men thrust women aside to leap into the succouring boat; each one cared but for himself, or at most for his family, and recked but little of his neighbour so that he himself escaped. It was not until the place of refuge had been reached and the gray dim morning light had gradually dawned

over the tangled mass of once happy homes, that men forgot their fear and their joy at their own escape to look round them and say, 'Poor So-and-so has lost his all;' 'Poor So-and-so, a father, a wife, a child.'

With little help from the purely fanciful, the above may be taken as a parable of the history of the sericulturists during the crisis of the pébrine. Heedless of the warnings of wise men, they reaped their gains in fancied security. The disease swept over them, and each essayed to save himself from ruin, and thought but little of the common weal. Then came the subsidence of the wave, and, amid the first great joy of relief, those who had gone to the wall were forgotten—only for a time, for many a gap had been made in the countryside. Many a household, erst rich in its golden harvests, had scattered far and wide to seek bread, to find in other scenes a home.

The pébrine has nearly run its course, and although another disease—the 'flacherie'—causes anxiety, let us hope the sorely tried sericulturists have before them a period of comparative prosperity, so that times of distress and disease may become traditions of the past.

MY REVERIE IN A LONDON LODGING.

Yes, it may be December now, and it may be perfectly true that my eyes are smarting so with yellow fog that I can't read the learned law-book which lies open before me; but that is not the only reason why I have made up my mind to think over and (when the fog clears, if it ever does) to write a short account of my summer, or rather autumn, holiday this year. You see I am not very young; but circumstances made me feel unduly youthful this summer. I was punished by rheumatism of a severe kind, and think my story may act as a warning to other men of my years.

I chose one of the fairest parts of the Thames valley for my month's pleasuring, and determined, by hard sculling and constant open air, to recruit mind and body. I obtained a light boat from Oxford; it was built to carry two, but it only did that twice.

She looked so pretty that day I saw her first, in a dress of pale shimmering blue, and with a sailor hat coquettishly resting on her golden hair! Beside her stood her brother, an Eton boy of frank and pleasant countenance, with hair like his sister's. A friend had introduced me, and I was in a seventh heaven, when this siren, turning coldly from a tall fellow in flannels, asked to be sculled up to Cliefden in my boat.

'Mine is here, Miss Lovell,' observed the tall fellow pointedly.

'Thanks, so I see,' answered the fair one coolly; 'but it isn't half so sweet as Mr. Grimsby's.'

'Have some sunflowers for decorations, Lottie,' suggested the Eton boy, with a grin. 'Do the aesthetic out and out.'

'Glorious! Pick two monsters for me, Jack?' cried the lady; and she stepped lightly into my boat, placing a large sunflower in the bow, and another in the stern. The tall young man and the laughing boy watched us glide away. Miss Lovell waved her fair hand, the sunflowers gleamed in the light of their god, and it was perfect bliss. There are times when a man ought to feel like a fool, and does not.

Under the hanging woods of Cliefden, rich in their August beauty, we lingered; and I saw with delight the envious glances men cast at my freight. This was worth living for, worth spending eleven months of the year in studying the patent laws, and getting smoke-dried in London.

I am not a vain man. Circumstances, except on the occasion I am writing about, have never brought me much into female society. Of course I have some female relatives, but of a calm order; nothing exciting about them. Doubtless these people are the best for ordinary wear; but I ask any man of my years (over forty-five a little) whether he would not have felt some elation at being deliberately encouraged by a beautiful girl of twenty!

Well, when we returned to the lawn from which we had started, that young man in flannels was lying at full length on the grass,

smoking, and reading a sporting paper. My fair one glanced towards him; but he did not stir.

'Jack, give me your hand!' she cried; and the Eton boy came and assisted her to land.

'Thank you *so* much, Mr. Grimsby! I have *so* enjoyed it! How I *should* like to see those glorious woods by moonlight!'

'Would you?' I eagerly answered; 'there is a splendid moon to-night.'

The man in flannels looked quickly round at this, and Miss Lovell said nothing, but walked towards a rustic table, where her mother dispensed tea. A cup was brought to me by Jack, who drew me aside before I left, and whispered hurriedly,

'Have the boat at the steps at nine o'clock. Don't say anything!'

With a sense of being, for the first time in my life, an arch-conspirator and a leading actor in a love affair, I beamed upon the lad—his sister's messenger—and went away to count the hours till nine.

I did not move the sunflowers; *her* hand had placed them, and how well they looked in the full light of the August moon! Methought I was like a knight of old approaching the abode of my dainty love; and there by the landing-steps, screened by the shrubs from the house, I beheld the shimmer of the pale-blue gown.

Thickly veiled, she stepped into the boat, holding up a warning hand enveloped in a large fleecy white shawl. I pushed the boat off silently, and sculled some distance, ere I ventured a few soft words.

'S-s-h!' was my only answer.

In the lock, rising gently on the foaming water, I spoke again.

'S-s-h!' again cautioned my fair one.

Once out of the narrow channel above Boulter's, the moon lit up the woods into a scene of perfect beauty. I longed then to speak my love, and sculled close to the island Miss Lovell had so admired by day. Here was my opportunity, clearly; for the shrouded hand was raised for me to linger.

'My darling!' I began, and up rose the adored one. With a spring—I must admit a heavy and awkward one—the pale-blue dress shimmered on the narrow island. In terror I exclaimed,

'I have frightened you—forgive me!'

'Not at all, Mr. Grimsby!' cried a powerful young voice, full of laughter. 'I've enjoyed myself *so* much; but I *must* be off now.'

And the shawl and blue dress were thrown off, and that execrable Eton boy sprang into a punt that was fixed at the opposite side of the island, and that man in flannels was in it; and they punted hard away home, leaving me alone with my sunflowers and my confusion.

I have a certain satisfaction in stating that this diabolical plot was hatched by the man in flannels and the Eton boy; *she* knew nothing of it. Neither did I know that Miss Lovell was engaged to be married to the man in flannels; for I am a strictly honourable man, and would not have forgotten myself in this or any other case. In fact there had been a lovers' quarrel, and—hard lines rather!—the girl had made a cat's-paw of me.

Yes, this fog is very depressing, and my landlady supplies abominable coals, and the gas is not worth a farthing.

What a boon to society at large the electric light will be!

HARRY.

'ANOTHER train on in half an hour. Will any gentleman get out to oblige a lady?'

The station at Oxenholme Junction, 'change here for Windermere,' was crowded with travellers hastening lakewards, and anxious to reach their various destinations in time for dinner or tea, as the case might be. The platform was still dotted with the different costumes, ultra-pretty or ultra-ugly, which delight the tourist eye, though the train now on the point of starting was already so full that distinctions of class had been lost sight of in the rush for seats made by the famished and tired crowd. Mrs. Salway felt sure that such was the case as she sat in the corner of her first-class carriage, and alternately cast angry glances at the people who had scrambled in after her, and piteous ones at her younger daughter, who had not been so successful in the crush, and was now standing forlornly enough upon the platform.

'It is so like Mary,' Mrs. Salway murmured to her elder daughters; 'really your father should have waited for us; this is the last time that we travel in two parties. I had no idea that first-class passengers were crowded out of their seats, and mixed with everybody in this way. I suppose we must get out, and all stay until the next train.'

And indeed the other passengers, notwithstanding the guard's invitation and her black looks, showed no inclination to postpone their arrival for half an hour, and risk

the chance of being late at *table d'hôte*.

There was one passenger, sitting in the opposite corner from the platform, who excited Mrs. Salway's more particular spleen. She was quite certain that the ticket in his pocket, if he had one at all (this was a mental reservation), was for the third class. His rough suit was shabby, and had seen much service, more especially the knickerbocker part of it, and in that service his soft gray hat had apparently shared to a very considerable extent. His boots were as innocent of blacking as his stick of varnish, and the small knapsack above his head would have failed to carry confidence to the mind of the least suspicious of hotel-keepers. But he had some redeeming points about him: his hands were gloved—in old gloves once yellow, it is true—and he 'gave up his seat to oblige a lady,' according to the guard's formula.

From his place in the corner of the carriage he could not see whom he was obliging, until, having retired with the shamefaced confusion which nine out of ten Englishmen assume when they are being conspicuously courteous, he stole a glance at her face as she stepped in.

She gave him a little bow of thanks, and a smile of such evident gratitude as would have converted the many family friends who considered Mary Salway rather plain than otherwise. She had a small pale face, with shy brown eyes a size too large for it; a rather timid retiring face, which

made one agree with her mother that giving way in a crush was 'just like Mary,' and very unlike Mrs. Salway. Our friend in knickerbockers saw the smile, and would fain have become better acquainted with it; but the train was already moving off with the young lady, and, as he remembered when too late, with his knapsack as well.

So it happened that when he did reach Windermere station his scanty baggage was not to be found. Knapsacks, large and small, are common things at the Lakes, and inquiries were in vain. The Crown Hotel at Bowness reached, he was only just in time to get the last vacant room, a little one at the top of the house, much encumbered with spare baths, a baby's crib, and other odds and ends, but otherwise almost as ill provided with furniture as he was with luggage. However, he was lucky in not having to sleep under the billiard-table, as has happened to some wayfarers in those parts; and besides, the room had such a view of the head of Windermere, the Langdale Pikes, and High-street, as made up for some slight inconveniences.

Strict evening dress is not demanded by etiquette at the Lake hotels. Some of the company, no doubt, are Americans, travelling with mountains of iron-bound trunks bearing the labels of half the hotels in Europe; many are honeymooning couples, arrayed in the newest of apparel from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot. But many also carry their luggage in their hands or on their backs, and so swallow-tails and spotless shirt-fronts are out of the question. But the etiquette of the *table d'hôte* does look for one thing, and that is a black coat of some kind or other. Therefore Mrs. Salway, who for various

reasons had not felt all her daughter's gratitude, was much aggrieved at the presence of our hero in his knickerbocker suit; not knowing that it was through his courtesy that he was compelled to appear in this (to Mrs. Salway, with whom form and ceremony were fetishes, from whose worship rank and wealth alone were free) disgraceful state. But she was more aggrieved at his proximity to her party, and most of all at her husband's stupidity and mismanagement in leaving Mary to take the outside seat, so that the young fellow was next to her. The objectionable gentleman did not see the matter at all in the same light; but having attacked the young lady's reserve by the usual observations about the weather, rattled on so pleasantly that Mary quite forgot that she had not been introduced to him, and was emboldened to say with a little blush,

'I am so much obliged to you for your kindness this afternoon; had you not given up your seat we should have all had to stay.'

'I was very glad to be of service to you. Do you stop here long?'

'A week at least, I believe.'

'I suppose you have private rooms here, and you will disappear after dinner?'

'O no; my father likes to see strangers, and the coming and going; he thinks it a change after home life.'

'Very true,' answered the gentleman, with a look of content on his face which was not lost upon Mary. She begins to feel that the Lake holiday promises to be at least as agreeable as she had expected. Women are quick, very quick, to read men's thoughts when they are turned towards themselves—even such a shy little Hampstead maiden as Mary, just released from the governess's thralldom, and still

suffering a good deal from repression at the hands of her mother and sisters. She steals a look at him while he is engaged with his *entrée*. He is not handsome; she settles that at once. He is not tall, with a black moustache, flashing dark eyes, and an imposing manner; only a keen sunburnt face is his, with small black whiskers, and with eyes bright enough, but of no particular colour. But if his clothes are old and shabby he seems at home in them, and perfectly at ease with his company; she is certain that he is a gentleman, not because he gave up his seat to her, but by a hundred tiny proofs. And she enjoys her first hotel dinner very much, and wonders whether the same seats will be reserved for them every evening.

So when she rises and he bows, Mary is inclined to view the world through rose-coloured spectacles. Not so her mother. Mrs. Salway has, during dinner, been talking to an old gentleman who chanced to sit next to her and whom she does not know from Adam; but nevertheless on the road to the drawing-room she puts before Mary the enormity of talking to a gentleman to whom she had not been introduced, and begs her to behave herself like Agnes and Laura, who, having been walled in from such approaches by those heavy flanking parties, Mr. and Mrs. Salway, have had no chance of sinning in the same way. Her father is instructed to see that Mary is not allowed to outlie the party another evening; and when the objectionable young gentleman 'actually has the audacity,' to quote Mrs. Salway's words, to enter the drawing-room in his knickerbockers, and looks inquiringly round as if for some particular person, he finds Mary penned in a corner by her mother and sisters, who regard

him, and especially his nether garments, with looks in which wonder and scorn are finely blended. That richly dressed matron having set the example, he finds himself rather coolly received in other quarters, and soon retires from the scene in search, if I may make a guess, of the smoking-room.

But strict reserve in the club-like life of a tourists' hotel is difficult to maintain. If you do not meet your bugbear (or *vice versé*, for it is more polite to suppose that you, reader, stand in Mary's place than in her elders') upon the coach to Ullawater, you will do so most probably next day on that going to Coniston; if not in the drawing-room, then in that favourite resort the verandah; if not at breakfast, then at dinner, or lunch, or lighting a bedroom candle, or on the steamboat, you will be sure to find him or her opposite to you. So it was with our young friends, and Mary suffered in consequence. The sisters persisted, as sisters will in such a case, that Mary encouraged him, but I believe that he needed small encouragement. Now and then too he suffered a little; Mrs. Salway would be rude to him, and the girls overlooked and alighted him with a haughty contempt that was certainly felt more by Mary than by the person for whom it was chiefly intended. Mrs. Salway had made up her mind that he was a commercial traveller, and was not chary of stating her belief; so that the young fellow without a black coat came quite unconsciously to be considered a rather objectionable member of the little community; a wolf—and worse, a low class of wolf.

This had gone on for more than a week, when the Salways went by coach to Coniston, with the intention, as far as the younger ones were concerned, of ascending

the Old Man. It was a bright and gloriously fine morning, one of those so sparingly granted amid this beautiful scenery. The party were in the highest spirits: the careful mother had begun to contemplate changing their plans, and running away from that vulgar young man, who had last evening crowned his other enormities by openly drinking beer out of a pewter at the *table d'hôte* dinner; but now she congratulated herself on his absence. If it must be confessed, Mary was a little dull; no doubt the scenery was beautiful, and her sisters were prepared to join in any amount of loudly-expressed admiration of it, as they swept past Esthwaite Water, and over Coniston Pass, and through the thickly-wooded slope that, like a shrubbery, surrounds Coniston Water, and forms so rich a contrast to the bare gigantic sides of the Old Man. But she brightened up directly.

'I declare now,' cried Mrs. Salway, as they came in sight of the village hotel, 'if there's not that dreadful young man! Now, Mary, remember what I told you.'

'The child can't be rude to him,' said her father, who had a sneaking preference for Mary, and had seen the faint blush which that figure lounging there at the porch had brought to her cheeks long before her mother had noted the gentleman's identity.

'We had better wait and let him go up the hill first; I suppose he has walked here,' said Agnes, a dark handsome girl, who always attracted a circle of admirers, and had brought two or three with her on this expedition.

'Nonsense!' cried Mr. Salway. 'If we are to go up we must start at once; the coach will leave at six, and that does not give us any too much time. What will you and Laurado?' added he to his wife.

'O, we will walk a little way round the lake, papa. I don't envy you your climb, especially if you will bring me a nice root of the parsley fern.'

Laura was the studious and learned member of the family, seldom visible without spectacles, and more attached to ferns and botany than to any one outside her own circle.

It is a very long pull up-hill from Coniston village to the top of the Old Man, towering nearly three thousand feet above it, and so our party found it. They started five, but had not gone far when the objectionable young fellow joined them, and, seizing his opportunity, soon detached Mary from the rest. I believe that, on this occasion at any rate, she made some resistance. But Agnes had her hands too full of her swains to look after her sister; and as for Mr. Salway, who was stout and more at his ease upon the pavement of the Stock Exchange than the side of a Westmoreland fell, he had enough to do to mind his own business up the winding path, even though for a long distance that path cannot be called precipitous. Mary was far lighter and more nimble than her Juno-like sister; and so the pair, in no very long time, took the lead. That the young gentleman had not been wasting his time, may be inferred from a scrap of the conversation.

'I wonder whether this week has been as pleasant to you as to me, Mary?'

'It has been very nice. The lakes are delightful.'

'Ah, of course; you must have had a pleasant drive this morning!' answered he, with some haste.

'O yes, pretty well,' assented Mary, but dubiously.

'I am going away to-morrow.' She turned her face the other

way, and diligently rooted up a bit of parsley—a very scrubby bit too, though there were plenty of splendid clusters not far off. Then she said frankly, though still with her face turned away,

‘I am so sorry.’

‘Are you really, dear? Won’t your mother be glad, though? She doesn’t like me much.’

‘No,’ said Mary candidly.

‘Do you?’

‘You have no right to ask me that.’

‘Have I not? And why not, Miss Mary?’

‘Because—because you have not told me—whether you like me.’

‘I think I called you something, Miss Mary Salway, a few minutes ago,’ glancing up and down the path; they were just in the centre of the gorge near the Low Water Tarn, and there was no one in sight. Mary did not answer. ‘You’ve forgotten, perhaps, what it was, dear?’

She shook her head.

‘I meant it. You *are* very dear to me.’

‘You’ve only known me nine days.’

His arm, which had been assisting her up the steep path, was now giving her much surer support.

‘And to know you a day, my darling, is to love you.’

And Mary, her arms full of parsley fern, was kissed before she could escape. Then a little reaction of feeling took place on her part.

‘I don’t even know your name,’ she said, standing still.

‘Of course not; Harry. It’s rather a common name, isn’t it?’

‘Harry!’ murmured the girl softly; ‘and—and what else?’

‘O, never mind that. You have not yet answered my question whether you liked me.’

‘Yes, I like you.’

‘That won’t do, Mary. The question is now altered to—love me?’

‘You have answered it for yourself, I think. Do you suppose I should have let you do what you have, if I had not?’

And they went on up the hill.

When they reached the top it was unoccupied; and seldom, indeed, had it been gained by two more happy people. A sunny smiling world stretched round them from sea to sea, the lights and shadows flitting over the green sides of the Old Man’s brethren; while below, lake beyond lake reflected the sky, and round them, peak beyond peak, the mountains stretched as far as eye could reach. Only Scawfell’s summit was veiled in mist. They stood by the cairn, and for a moment almost forgot one another in the grandeur of the sight. No, not forgot one another; rather it was the thought of the other’s presence which tinged with a brighter lustre the brightest sunbeam on the distant lakes. No wonder that they sat down by the cairn, taking no very careful note of the passage of time, and talked more of those sweet nothings than before. At length Harry looked at his watch, and discovered that they had but an hour in which to make the descent if they wished to catch the coach.

‘The others must have given it up, and turned back, Mary.’

‘I suppose so. We must come up with them, or mamma will be so angry.’

‘Poor little Mary!’

‘Don’t, sir! How misty it has become!’

‘By Jove! so it has. I ought to have looked out. Have we not the world to ourselves? But I wish I were quite certain which is the side by which we came up.

We must make a start, anyhow.'

Have you ever, when at the top of a Westmoreland hill, found yourself silently, as if by magic, surrounded by a mist, from which a London fog would, for density and a power of confusing things, hardly bear off the palm? A moment ago a smiling plain, set with lakes, as if with jewels, and rimmed with purple hills, was before you; a little puff of thin mist almost transparent rises from some neighbouring gorge, another, and another, and lo, your prospect is narrowed to a few yards, perhaps a few feet, of turf and shale, a cold ghastly cairn of stones, and beyond—nothing, nothing but mist, surrounding your little island like a gray ocean. While all is clear, it is so hard for a novice in mountains to realise the difficulty of finding his way in such a state of things; but the difficulty is very real. Our hero, who had experience of it, was quite at fault, nevertheless; he had been too much occupied with his companion to notice the direction of the wind, or any landmarks which might indicate the side on which they had come up. Once safely upon the path, the foot of the hill might, by patience and care, be gained; but the summit was stony and on two sides precipitous. He remembered that a honeymooning couple had only a week before been caught upon Helvellyn and detained all night by the mist. Such an adventure would be much worse for himself and Mary; the latter would certainly suffer, so he made a resolute attempt to descend.

Mary trusted to him implicitly, and hand in hand they had successfully descended some distance, although the steepness of the hill-side and its rocky nature made him feel pretty sure that this was

not the side by which they had gained the top. Slip, stumble, slip, here a few yards of steep turf aiding them, there the stones giving way under foot, and warning him at least that they were on the border of a scree. The ground grew more and more treacherous and rocky; after a stumble worse than those which had preceded it, he stopped to try if their eyes could distinguish anything through the gulf of mist into which they had nearly plunged headlong. No, the curtain was as thick as ever, and the rain-besides was falling heavily. Then he started a large stone, in order to judge by its descent what kind of ground lay in front of them: three yards, and it was hidden from sight; bound, bound, twice it struck the rocks, and then an interval of silence, and then a sudden distant splash. He shuddered, and drew the girl back against the rocks.

'Thank God!' he muttered; 'a few more steps and we should have gone over the scree into Low Water Tarn.'

Mary's distress, as slowly and very carefully they retraced their steps, may be well imagined. Not only was she tired, worn out, and frightened, but the thought of what would be said if they could not descend speedily was tormenting her. The poor girl was feverishly anxious at any risk to get off the hill, and her companion had much work to prevent her meeting with a mishap. Consequently, when they a second time reached the cairn at the top, they were in a very different frame of mind. The young fellow groaned as he looked at his watch, and found it was nearly seven o'clock and the mist thicker than ever. But not a word of reproach did the brave little maid utter to him.

In the mean time the party

assembled in the hotel at the foot of the hill were passing through quite a series of anxieties. When six o'clock came, and with it the returning coach, Mrs. Salway's anger at the absence of her younger daughter could hardly be concealed from the outside public. Of course they could not leave her, and the coach had to depart without them. Her husband present and Mary absent shared the mother's reproaches with the objectionable young gentleman, while the sisters were quite as much surprised as they expressed themselves to be, for this was 'so unlike Mary.' But when nine o'clock came and no signs of the missing ones, and the mist grew thicker, the landlady expressed herself decidedly of the opinion that the young lady and gentleman would have to stay upon the hill all night, and hoped they had some wraps.

'Stay on the hill all night, woman! My daughter with that young man! Good gracious, Mr. Salway, you must do *something*! This is too dreadful!'

So a search-party was organised, though with some difficulty, and guides, brandy, and lanterns obtained; but before it set out Mrs. Salway had been moved to contemplate the affair from a different point of view. She heard the 'tarn' and the 'cliffs' mentioned in whispers by the guides with ominous glances, and saw from her husband's face that he knew and did not think lightly of their suspicions. Up to this time she had thought only of her daughter's good name, and the way in which it was being compromised, but now her fears for her daughter's safety took the place of this feeling. Agnes and Laura, eloquent enough before, were awed into silence, and the affair was assuming a very serious light in the

eyes of all, when a cry outside proclaimed some news, and just as the party were starting into the mist and rain, the lost ones stood before them.

'Thank Heaven!' cried Mr. Salway, taking charge of Mary, who, what with her worn-out condition and her very natural confusion, was near fainting. Mrs. Salway, in the revulsion of feeling from fear to relief and then to anger, had nothing to say on the spur of the moment. The girls surrounded Mary, and as they did so looked defiance, and yet a sort of admiration, at her daring companion.

'Please look to your daughter, Mrs. Salway; she is very wet and fatigued. It is my fault and that of the mist that we are so late. But I will explain, I am sure to your satisfaction, in the morning.'

'To my satisfaction, sir!' cried Mrs. Salway, taking up an indignant attitude between him and Mary; but before she could say any more the greater culprit had gone, and the lesser one was not in a state at present to hear the lecture which Mrs. Salway was prepared to administer. And I think it was still being held *in terrorem* over the young lady when they took their seats outside the coach for Bowness next day; she was evidently in disgrace, and her mother would not let her quit her side for a moment. For a wonder, Mary had escaped all injurious effects of the exposure, and though very quiet this morning and very shy, she did not look altogether unhappy, and once or twice on the road a smile would cross the demure little face, and a twinkle of fun appear in the big brown eyes. Mrs. Salway saw something of this, and feeling sure that Mary was infatuated with that 'dreadful young fellow,' added a few severe phrases to the

lecture she was conning, and hardened her heart to administer it without mercy. 'Mary shall go home to Hampstead to-morrow; with Anne she will be out of danger,' she mentally determined; Anne being the sourest of Mary's maiden aunts, at this present moment taking care of their house during the holidays. 'No more holidays for you, young lady,' thought her mother to herself.

They had passed Esthwaite Water, and were nearing Windermere, when the attention of all upon the coach was attracted by the sight of a four-in-hand behind them. It was splendidly horsed, and, as two servants in handsome liveries were sitting behind, was clearly a private coach. It came along with a wonderful smoothness, which put the spring of the rickety vehicle upon whose top they were perched to shame. Nevertheless it seemed in no hurry to pass them; and presently Mr. Salway, who had been running his eyes over the horses with an expression of critical approval, asked his own driver whose was the four-in-hand following them.

'I guess it will be Sir Henry Narborough's,' said he, whistling up his horses, and getting to the side of the road. 'I see his team standing in the hotel-yard when I was a-starting. They're four as pretty bays with white stockings as ever I see together.'

'It's Sir Henry Narborough's four-in-hand,' explained Mr. Salway to his womenkind, as the other drew gradually alongside.

Ah, Miss Mary, how your cheek has been flushing and blushing, and your eye brightening, and your mouth smiling a proud happy smile, though you have never looked up to see who is the spruce driver of this gallant equipage, turned out in all respects fit for

Hyde Park! Now he is alongside, handling the ribbons, though the road is narrow and steep, with the ease of custom, looking, with his tall hat and black coat and the flower in his button-hole, every inch a baronet and a member of the Coaching Club. He is alongside, and not until then, when he lifts his hat and shoots one glance at Mary, sitting well protected by her mother and sisters from the wolf—wolf indeed! wolf no longer—not until then do the others recognise their old acquaintance of the knickerbockers and shabby hat. He is gone before they can express their astonishment, or any; but she, who is so well prepared for it, returns his salute.

'Good gracious!' uttered Mrs. Salway slowly, her eyes glued to his back, 'can it be? I suppose it really is. Why, who can it be? Can it be his coach?'

'Sir Harry Narborough, I suppose,' answered her husband dryly, who has secretly sympathised with Mary, and has been puzzling his brains how to rescue her from that lecture and other disagreeables that he suspects are being prepared for her.

'Mary, is that Sir Harry Narborough?'

'He told me so,' answered the girl demurely, as if the most impossible assertion from his lips would not have commanded her credence.

And it was really true. If the early part of Mary's courtship had had something of the bitter mingled with the sweet, that was all over now. No lectures, no banishment to aunt Anne for her. 'It was so unlike Mary,' said her sisters among themselves, meaning so unlike her to gain the heart of a baronet. But they were good girls in their way, and tolerably unselfish—just as ready to fall

down and worship and pet the successful sister as to repress and snub the schoolgirl. As for Mrs. Salway, when she found Sir Harry's four-in-hand standing at the door of the Crown, and half the visitors in Bowness standing round admiring it; when that rather cynical young gentleman received her at the door with all honour, and a few minutes later proposed for her youngest daughter; when he put that very coach at their disposal, and the whole party had a week's tour it; when all these things and many more almost as pleasant (including going in to the *table d'hôte* dinner on a baronet's arm) had happened,

why, Mrs. Salway taught herself to believe that this match was entirely of her contrivance, and was owing simply and purely to her good management and diplomacy.

And demure quiet Mary, with the shy little face and the big brown eyes, the baronet's wife to be, what of her? Well, nothing more, I think; for this happened in August of this year 1881, and among the forthcoming Christmas festivities an event of the utmost importance in Mary's life is arranged, which is looked upon by Mrs. Salway with much pride and satisfaction.

MY RUN FOR LIFE.

A South American Adventure.

I WAS young and careless at the time, but my 'run for life' sobered me—at least for a few days. Youth is generally endowed with a superabundance of animal spirits, together with a natural buoyancy; agencies which soon overcome the temporary effects of any serious occurrence that may intrude itself into the normal condition of life in its 'teens.'

I had just been newly imported from Scotland into the South American town of Rosario, on the banks of the Rio Parana, a bright little port increasing in importance every year, and a central shipping dépot for wool, grain, and hides brought from the many villages dotted over the surrounding prairies. From Rosario I had a long journey before me, having to make my way, as best I could, to a hamlet rejoicing in the euphonious title of Frayle Muerto, or, in English, 'the Dead Monk,' and situated in the province of Cordova, which adjoins that of Santa Fé, whose capital is Rosario. Looking about me for some mode of conveyance into the interior, I was fortunate enough to fall in with a Mr. W., an Englishman, who had been for a long time in the country, and was starting next day with a 'tropa' or troupe of mule-wagons for Cordova, the route to which place passed within a few miles of my destination. I gladly arranged to accompany him; and the following morning saw me, seated in a covered cart drawn by mules, make my first entry on to the great flat pampas that, relieved by occasional patches of forest,

stretch for hundreds of miles, away to the foot of the mighty Cordilleras.

A first view of the prairies of South America can never be forgotten; it is more impressive than the feeling when in mid-ocean. Naught is seen but the great expanse of heaving billows lapping the horizon on every side. The tall prairie-grass bending before the breeze resembles the motion of the restless sea. The verdure is varied and beautiful, dotted here and there with immense ant-hills, from and to which industrious armies of ants march, some laden with leaves and broad blades of grass, which, presenting a surface sufficient for the wind to catch, considerably increases the burden of the staggering insect, sometimes toppling it entirely over, and reminding one of our advertising sandwich-men at home. We had made an early start, so when midday came our little caravan was glad of a rest. The mules were unyoked from their light wagons and allowed to stray round about, picking up what best suited their tastes from the great variety of grasses by the wayside. A fire was soon kindled, and the great native roast called *asado* got ready. The *asado* is simply a cut of beef, through which an iron rod is run, this rod being stuck in the ground and slanted over the fire in a manner that allows the beef to be quickly cooked. No meal is complete without the native tea, and both the tea itself and the manner of taking it are very different from the cup-and-saucer European cus-

tom. A small gourd about the size of an ordinary teacup is used, a hole being cut at one end, into which are put two or three spoonfuls of a herb called yerba—a plant indigenous to some parts of the country. The remaining space in this gourd is then filled up with hot water and occasionally a little sugar; and this maté or tea is enjoyed with the agency of a tube, through which it is sucked, American cocktail fashion, by the happy possessor for the time being, who, when he has drawn through the last drop of this South American nectar, hands the maté-cup to the servant, who, filling it up again with water, and, if necessary, adding a little more yerba and sugar, passes it on to guest number two; and so on, each one having several turns at the suction business, until all are satisfied. This mode of tea-drinking naturally enough takes a long time, and we were quite ready for siesta, which lasted until the great heat of the noonday sun had decreased in power. Then all was hurry getting the mules caught and yoked; and this work required no little skill and patience, for mules are as stubborn in one country as in another, and not only have a will of their own, but take a great many opportunities of giving ocular demonstration that such is the case, in a manner highly suggestive of there being a right and a wrong way of going about anything, but especially a wrong way. However, we eventually moved on, and did not again halt till sunset. Next morning we were off again by daybreak, and for the first time I saw the 'mirage' which, at early morn, frequently forms itself on the prairie horizon and is a most impressive spectacle. The imagination which has often pictured to itself castles in the air has them now full in sight, and to all appearance real

and tangible; and villages and farms, which are many leagues too far off to be seen by the ordinary light of day, stand forth, on a seeming foundation of shimmering air, clear and with every prominent object distinctly defined. Late in the afternoon of that day we arrived at a dilapidated-looking hut, at which point, being the nearest to Frayle Muerto, I was to part company with my companion and his mule caravan.

While Mr. W. was arranging with the owner of the hut to supply me with a horse and a mounted guide, so that I might get over to my destination that same evening, I had time to look about me, and was greatly impressed with the forlorn-looking condition of my surroundings. The rancho, or native hut, was a wretched structure, with mud walls and a clumsily thatched roof, and consisted of two rooms, one of the apartments evidently being used as a kitchen and bedroom, while the other appeared to be of a nondescript character. There was no attempt at cultivation, the prairie-grass growing up to the very walls of the house, excepting in the front, where constant use had stamped out the grass and left the bare earth, on parts of which was a small yard of posts or coral, in which were confined some horses. Lounging about the gate of this yard were some half-dozen natives, or rather gauchos, as, judging from their appearance, they were more like partly civilised Indians. The costume of each consisted of a red shirt, a pair of wide drawers, partly covered by a species of petticoat called a chiripa, and the native cloak or poncho; a broad belt was worn round the waist, and a gaudily coloured handkerchief tied over the head took the place of the Spanish sombrero. The garments,

such as they were, had stood many a rough storm, but seemed incapable of standing many more, the material being of the poorest and thinnest, while the original colours had long since faded away. These men were mostly barefooted, and their coarse matted hair and swarthy faces told of few interviews with the toilet-table.

Before parting with Mr. W., I took occasion to refund him some expenses he had incurred for me during our journey together, and when paying him I thoughtlessly exposed my purse, which was well lined with bright gold sovereigns, and I noticed that the eyes of some of the natives had been attracted towards us while we were settling accounts. Whether Mr. W. saw this or not I cannot say, but he did not leave the place until, after a hearty farewell between us, he saw me mounted and along with my guide fairly started for Frayle Muerto.

Although I had a little experience of riding in Scotland, this was my first 'mount' in America, and neither the horse nor myself got on well together. The native recado is very different from our home saddle, and sometimes, as in the present case, has only one little wooden stirrup, just large enough to admit of your big toe resting in while you mount. This want of stirrups and my pulling the bridle English fashion, instead of, as is the native mode, merely allowing the reins to gently touch the neck of the horse on the contrary side towards which he is to turn, had the effect of making both of us very uncomfortable. There was nothing but open prairie to be seen, excepting to the westward, where I could see a long line of trees, and in their direction we were going. I had just taken my last look at Mr. W.'s caravan, as, wending its way into a cañada or slight

depression in the prairie, it disappeared from my sight, when I was startled by loud shouts, and on looking back I saw some of the gauchos, whom I had left at the native hut, now mounted and galloping towards me. On arriving at close quarters, they did all they could to frighten my horse, by swinging their lassos over their heads and cantering round me in a gradually lessening circle, my guide basely deserting me and joining in the attack. This novel proceeding had the effect of making my horse plunge violently, and as I only knew very few words of the native language, I could hardly convince them by persuasive argument to desist. In my attempts to keep my seat in the saddle, I foolishly tried to place my foot and my confidence in the wretched stirrup, which suddenly giving way, over I went, falling with my head downwards. The shock stunned me for a short time, but I still held firm to the bridle, and so detained the horse from escaping. In a few minutes I managed to remount, and had no sooner done so, when, closing in on all sides, the gauchos actually 'hounded' my horse back to the hut which I had so recently left. The fall had stupefied me to such an extent that I did not properly realise my position until after the natives had pulled me off horseback and examined if I had any firearms on my person. I was the happy owner of a fine new revolver, but unfortunately it was useless to me then, being, along with the most of my baggage, safely stored in Rosario. Satisfying themselves that I was unarmed, the gauchos pushed me into the room which I had previously noticed as answering to no particular description, and, shutting the door, left me 'alone in my glory.'

After collecting my bewildered

faculties as well as I could, I naturally began to think over the matter; but not deriving any satisfaction from its consideration, I took from my pocket a small edition of a book entitled *Easy Conversations in Spanish and English*, which I had carried carefully with me since my arrival in the country, and diligently hunted up a few words which I thought applicable to my present situation. The most *apropos* 'conversation' I could find, however, was one supposed to be held on entering an hotel, which was hardly encouraging in the present state of affairs. I had observed that the patron, or owner of the hut, with whom Mr. W. had settled preliminaries, had taken no active part in my imprisonment; so going to the door, which, having no lock, was easily opened, I shouted, in my most commanding tone, 'Patron, patron!' Presently Mr. 'Patron' came, and I, book in hand for ready reference, commenced a violent protest against his unlooked-for hospitality, and I wound up by insisting to be sent on with a guide immediately. As my oration was mostly English, and the remainder very questionable Spanish, it had the effect of irritating Mr. 'Patron' sufficiently to cause him to shrug his shoulders significantly, and then hurry off, slamming the door behind him. This proceeding disconcerted me most effectually; and when I began to think of the cunning way in which the gauchos had waited until Mr. W. and his caravan were out of sight and hearing before coming after me, my want of firearms, and their knowledge of my possessing gold, also my being an unknown stranger in these parts, and their own restless and irresponsible lives, having no particular homes or livelihood, I felt then that my

first adventure in this new country might also be my last. I recalled stories I had read and heard of these wild gauchos, their admiration of those of their number who had committed the most murders, their lawlessness and general indifference to bloodshed; and as I caused my blood to run cold with such recollections, I began to feel how helpless I was, and blame myself severely for not having taken the precautions adopted in these parts of going about well armed. Looking out of the doorway, I observed the gauchos, who were standing a few yards off, talking earnestly to each other, and constantly glancing towards me. The sun had now set, and it was quickly growing dark, the twilight being of very short duration in this country. Taking out my case of cigarettes, I lit one, and began to walk quietly up and down in front of the hut, puffing away as unconcernedly as I possibly could; but each turn I took was a little longer than its predecessor, and the length was always increased towards the side on which lay the wood we had previously started for. While pretending to be thinking of nothing in particular, but simply enjoying my evening smoke unconscious of danger, I lit my second cigarette, continuing my one-sided promenade, until my 'tether' was being stretched to such an extent that I saw the gauchos were beginning to suspect me; so taking an extra long turn, and watching my opportunity, I simply 'turned tail' and fled. Running as fast as I possibly could straight for the distant forest, towards which we had originally set out, I never felt in such a hurry in all my life as I did on that occasion. I knew I had a good start, but then the fleet horses of the gauchos! As I anticipated, in

the hurry and confusion which my unlooked-for retreat produced, it was a little time before I saw myself pursued, and every moment was precious to me then.

During my schooldays racing had always been my favourite sport, and I made a good use of my practice now, especially when, on glancing over my shoulder, I saw some of the gauchos hurrying after me on horseback. While straining every effort to increase my speed, I could not help constantly giving hasty looks behind; and I noticed that the gauchos were urging on their steeds with whip and spur while lying well forward, their ponchos flying behind with the wind, caused by their swift motion through the air. I had by this time got very near to the wood, else I could not have seen it, as all daylight had already faded away. I knew that once amongst the trees I could elude my pursuers where the scrub grew thickest, as they would not be able to follow me quickly on horseback; and if they dismounted I was fully equal to them, as, notwithstanding my long run, I still felt in good fettle. Another spurt and I might gain the welcome shelter of the trees in time. I could now hear the snorting of the horses as they tore after me, as well as the excited cries of their wild masters. Another few yards and they would have run me down, when, with one great bound, I leapt over an old pile of dead branches, and dashed into a part of the wood where the undergrowth was heavy and the trees grew closely together. I was now obliged to slacken my pace and thread my way with care through the luxuriant vegetation, trying to keep on in the same direction I had at first taken. I could not now hear the shouts of the baffled gauchos,

who had evidently given up the chase, or else were following me silently on foot; but this I thought very unlikely, as they rarely walk far, living, as they do, almost entirely on horseback.

With an easier mind, but trembling excessively, owing to the inevitable reaction which sets in after any great excitement, I now sauntered leisurely along, and was soon surprised and delighted to see some large fires in the wood, around which I trusted to find some rancheros or farmers camping out for the night. I was advancing with a light heart, when, on a nearer inspection, I saw by the glare of the fires large groups seated in circles, seemingly enjoying a feast. Two or three dogs, having scented a stranger, began to bark furiously, causing some of their masters to rise from their recumbent positions and gaze in my direction. I knew they could not see me, as I stood in a dark recess of the wood; but observing now that the number of men was very great, I suddenly remembered that large bands of Indians made frequent incursions to these parts, stealing cattle, and often carrying off the wives and children belonging to the native farmers. Knowing that the Indians had a deep-rooted hatred to foreigners, rarely allowing them to escape with their lives when captured, I, even in my extremity, thought of the old adage, 'Out of the frying-pan into the fire,' and almost wished myself back in the old rancho again.

Fortunately, however, I had evidently not been discovered; so off I set again, although fearing that perhaps while hurrying from the Indians I might rush into the clutches of the gauchos. After some time, hearing no signs of pursuit, I slackened my pace, feeling unwilling to go very far,

not knowing what I might next encounter. I had not eaten anything all day, and I began to feel very hungry; I felt chilled as well, for it was midwinter, and, although the sun is strong during the day, the nights are often bitterly cold. Being my first experience of a South American forest, and not knowing what class of ravenous beasts inhabited such parts, I felt a sort of unconquerable dread creeping over me when any animal gave vent to its midnight howl, as I could not tell from what kind of brute the cry might emanate. I laugh when I think of it now; but, in good truth, the situation was decidedly unpleasant, especially to a mere boy, and in a country till then principally known to me through the agency of the school atlas.

Tired out at last with excitement and fatigue, I felt a drowsiness stealing over me too strong to be overcome; and, frightened to trust myself on the ground with all sorts of unknown animals prowling about in search of supper, I scrambled up a tall tree, and, settling myself away high up on two stout forked branches, fell asleep before I had time to properly close my eyes. I did not slumber long, the cold was too intense, and I woke up frozen so stiff that it was some time before I could move a limb. I saw the

danger of being 'up a tree' on such a night; so painfully descending, I eventually got back some heat by hurrying onwards, where I could not tell.

Eventually I found myself on the banks of a river, and, as it seemed shallow, I determined to ford it. As I waded across the cold stream, the stars appeared to twinkle more brightly, and, as I landed, I felt that I was on the right side this time. Climbing up the bank, I found myself on a road, which quickly led me to some houses, in one of which I saw a light gleaming. I soon was at the door, which I found open, and entering, I saw some natives indulging in a game of billiards, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour. The place was a billiard saloon, and the proprietor coming forward, I showed him a card on which was written the address of the resident in Frayle Muerto, whom I wished to meet. He informed me, to my delight, that I was not only now safe in the village of the 'Dead Monk,' but close to my friend's house. Before leaving the saloon, however, I explained how hungry I was, and the kind saloon-keeper placed before me all he had in his store, from which I made one of the heartiest meals I ever enjoyed, though it consisted of—raisins and brandy!

ON THE ICE.

THE sky is cloudless,
The air is clear,
The sunbeams glitter
O'er lake and mere ;
And frost-gems glisten
On bough and leaf
In silvered splendour of beauty brief.

And like a swallow
O'er depths and deep
Where stream and river
Their treasures keep,
You skim and circle
The glistening floor :
Youth's hours for pleasure—no less, no more.

How bright eyes sparkle
And fair cheeks flush !
The cold air kisses
The warm rich blush.
By mere and meadow
You fly along,
Life's hours but set to an endless song.

Of pain or sorrow
No thought's unrest ;
Nor glad to-morrow,
Since all are blest ;
For one day's pleasure
No mad regret
For Fate to measure or sin to fret.

Through sun and shadow,
The whole glad day,
Your swift steps winging
Their own swift way ;
Your light heart beating
To lighter feet,
And youth and beauty to make life sweet.

What can be wanting ?
What rests to say
Of hours the sweetest
In life's long day !
Too brief the brightness,
Too long the night,
Yet dream they're deathless with all delight.

RITA.

